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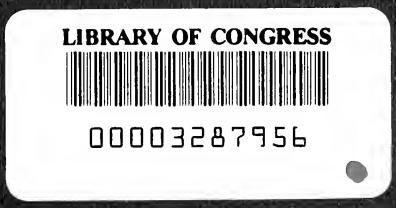

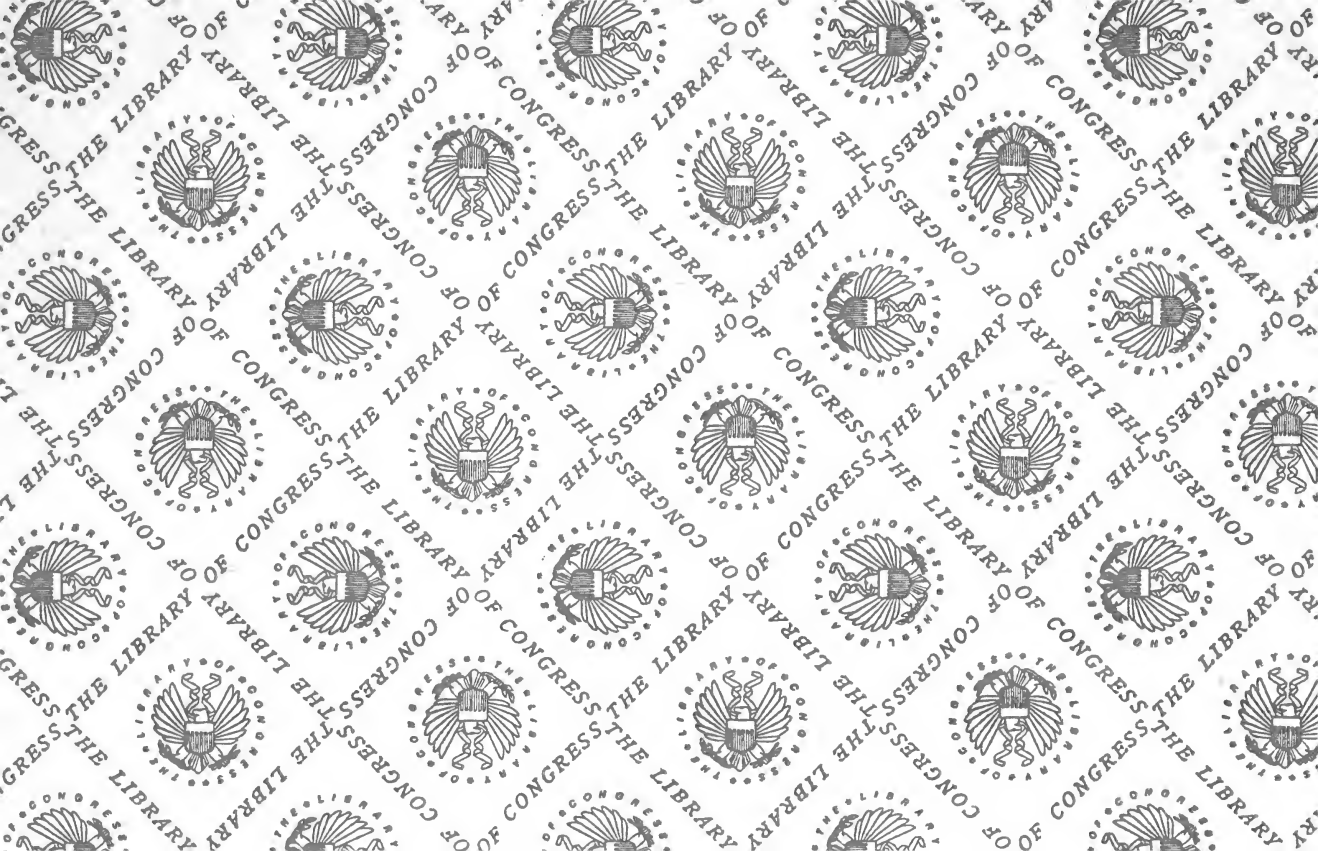
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SHORT PLAYS

BY

MARY MacMILLAN

CINCINNATI
STEWART & KIDD COMPANY
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TO
M. L.

Some are born dramatists — like Shakespeare, some achieve dramatic construction — like Ibsen, some have drama thrust upon them—like me. I did not lisp in numbers, for the numbers came, but rather I was locked up alone in a room with a crust of bread and a tincup of water and commanded to write a drama that could be produced by five or six women in forty-five minutes without scenery on a stage as big as a good-sized book. The process was repeated at intervals throughout the last few years and this little collection of plays is the result. With the exception of "The Gate of Wishes" they have all been presented by the Cincinnati College Club or the Cincinnati Woman's Club and otherwise and elsewhere. "The Gate of Wishes" was first published in *Poet Lore,* "A Fan and a Pair of Candlesticks" came out in the College Club edition of the *Club Woman's Magazine,* and "The Shadowed Star" was published separately by the Consumers' League. The songs in "The Rose" and "Entr' Acte" were set to music by Mr. Sidney C. Durst and may be obtained from me at any time. For the dance in "Entr' Acte" the music we used was "Espanita." The descriptions, stage-settings, directions, and so on throughout the plays are as I have seen them in my imagination, but may be changed according to the exigencies of any private performance. No one knows these exigencies better than I. And

if any one wishes to have Ralph's eyes green instead of brown, or Peter Dodsley's cloak sky-blue, or the scene of " A Woman's a Woman " out on the lawn, or to alter an unprepossessing speech — why, he has the whole universe to choose from, and my blessing.

MARY MAC MILLAN.

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THE SHADOWED STAR.

CAST.

A Woman, *the mother.*
An Old Woman, *the grandmother.*
Two Girls, *the daughters.*
A Messenger Boy.
A Neighbor.
Another Neighbor.

[*A very bare room in a tenement house, uncarpeted, the boards being much worn, and from the walls the bluish whitewash has scaled away; in the front on one side is a cooking-stove, and farther back on the same side a window; on the opposite side is a door opening into a hallway; in the middle of the room there is a round, worn dining-room table, on which stands a stunted, scraggly bit of an evergreen-tree; at the back of the room, near the window, stands an old-fashioned safe with perforated tin front; next it a door opening into an inner room, and next it in the corner a bed, on which lies a pallid woman; another woman, very old, sits in a rocking-chair in front of the stove and rocks. There is silence for a long space, the old woman rocking and the woman on the bed giving an occasional low sigh or groan. At last the old woman speaks.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. David an' Michael might be kapin' the Christmas wid us to-morrow night if we hadn't left the ould counthry. They'd never be crossin' the sea — all the many weary miles o' wetness an' fog an' cold to be kapin' it wid us here in this great house o' brick walls in a place full o' strange souls. They would never be for crossin' all that weary, cold, green wather, groanin' an' tossin' like it was the grave o' sivin thousan' divils. Ah, but it would be a black night at sea! [*She remains silent for a few minutes, staring at the stove and rocking slowly.*] If they hadn't to cross that wet, cold sea they'd maybe come. But wouldn't they be afeard o' this great city, an' would they iver find us here? Six floors up, an' they niver off the ground in their lives. What would ye be thinkin'? [*The other woman does not answer her. She then speaks petulantly.*] What would ye be thinkin'? Mary, have ye gone clane to slape? [*Turns her chair and peers around the back of it at the pallid woman on the bed, who sighs and answers.*]

THE WOMAN. No, I on'y wisht I could. Maybe they'll come — I don't know, but father an' Michael wasn't much for thravel. [*After a pause and very wearily.*] Maybe they'll not come, yet [*slowly*] maybe I'll be kapin' the Christmas wid them there. [*The Old Woman seems not to notice this, wandering from her question back to her memories.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. No, they'll niver be lavin' the ould land, the green land, the home land. I'm wishing I was there wid thim. [*Another*

pause, while she stares at the stove.] Maybe we'd have a duck an' potatoes, an' maybe something to drink to kape us warm against the cold. An' the boys would all be dancin' an' the girls have rosy cheeks. [*There is another pause, and then a knock at the door. "Come in," the two women call, in reedy, weak voices, and a thin, slatternly Irish woman enters.*]

THE NEIGHBOR. Good avnin' to ye; I came in to ask if I might borrow the loan o' a bit o' tay, not havin' a leaf of it left.

THE WOMAN. We have a little left, just enough we was savin' for ourselves to-night, but you're welcome to it — maybe the girls will bring some. Will ye get it for her, mother? Or she can help herself — it's in the safe. It's on the lower shelf among the cups an' saucers an' plates. [*The Old Woman and Neighbor go to the safe and hunt for the tea, and do not find it readily. The safe has little in it but a few cracked and broken dishes.*]

THE NEIGHBOR [*holding up a tiny paper bag with an ounce perhaps of tea in it*]. It's just a scrap!

THE OLD WOMAN. To be sure! We use so much tay! We're that exthravagant!

THE NEIGHBOR. It hurts me to take it from ye — maybe I'd better not.

THE OLD WOMAN. The girls will bring more. We always have a cupboard full o' things. We're always able to lend to our neighbors.

THE NEIGHBOR. It's in great luck, ye are. For some of us be so poor we don't know where

the next bite's comin' from. An' this winter whin iverything's so high an' wages not raised, a woman can't find enough to cook for her man's dinner. It isn't that ye don't see things — oh, they're in the markets an' the shops, an' it makes yer mouth wather as ye walk along the sthrates this day before the Christmas to see the turkeys an' the ducks ye'll niver ate, an' the little pigs an' the or'nges an' bananies an' cranberries an' the cakes an' nuts an'— it's worse, I'm thinkin', to see thim whin there's no money to buy than it was in the ould counthry, where there was nothing to buy wid the money ye didn't have.

THE WOMAN. It's all one to us poor folk whether there be things to buy or not. [*She speaks gaspingly, as one who is short of breath.*] I'm on'y thinkin' o' the clane air at home — if I could have a mornin' o' fresh sunshine — these fogs an' smoke choke me so. The girls would take me out to the counthry if they had time an' I'd get well. But they haven't time. [*She falls into a fit of coughing.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. But it's like to be bright on Christmas Day. It wouldn't iver be cloudy on Christmas Day, an' maybe even now the stars would be crapin' out an' the air all clear an' cold an' the moon a-shinin' an' iverything so sthill an' quiet an' gleamin' an' breathless [*her voice falls almost to a whisper*], awaitin' on the Blessed Virgin. [*She goes to the window, lifts the blind, and peers out, then throws up the sash and leans far out. After a moment she pulls the sash down again and the blind and turns to those in the room with the look of pathetic disappoint-*

ment in little things of the aged.] No, there's not a sthar, not one little twinklin' sthar, an' how'll the shepherds find their way? Iverything's dull an' black an' the clouds are hangin' down heavy an' sthill. How'll the shepherds find their way without the sthar to guide thim? [*Then almost whimpering.*] An' David an' Michael will niver be crossin' that wet, black sea! An' the girls — how'll they find their way home? They'll be lost somewhere along by the hedges. Ohone, ohone!

THE NEIGHBOR. Now, grannie, what would ye be sayin'? There's niver a hedge anywhere but granite blocks an' electric light poles an' plenty o' light in the city for thim to see all their way home. [*Then to the woman.*] Ain't they late?

THE WOMAN. They're always late, an' they kape gettin' lather an' lather.

THE NEIGHBOR. Yis, av coorse, the sthores is all open in the avnin's before Christmas.

THE WOMAN. They go so early in the mornin' an' get home so late at night, an' they're so tired.

THE NEIGHBOR [*whiningly*]. They're lucky to be young enough to work an' not be married. I've got to go home to the childer an' give thim their tay. Pat's gone to the saloon again, an' to-morrow bein' Christmas I misdoubt he'll be terrible dhrunk again, an' me on'y jist well from the blow in the shoulder the last time. [*She wipes her eyes and moves towards the door.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Sthay an' kape Christmas wid us. We're goin' to have our celebratin'

to-night on Christmas Eve, the way folks do here. I like it best on Christmas Day, the way 'tis in the ould counthry, but here 'tis Christmas Eve they kape. We're waitin' for the girls to come home to start things — they knowin' how — Mary an' me on'y know how to kape Christmas Day as 'tis at home. But the girls'll soon be here, an' they'll have the tree an' do the cookin' an' all, an' we'll kape up the jollity way into the night.

THE NEIGHBOR [*looks questioningly and surprised at the Woman, whose eyes are on the mother.*] Nay, if Pat came home dhrunk an' didn't find me, he'd kill me. We have all to be movin' on to our own throubles. [*She goes out, and the old woman leaves the Christmas-tree which she has been fingering and admiring, and sits down in the rocking-chair again. After a while she croons to herself in a high, broken voice. This lasts some time, when there is the noise of a slamming door and then of footsteps approaching.*]

THE WOMAN. If I could on'y be in the counthry!

THE OLD WOMAN. Maybe that would be the girls! [*She starts tremblingly to her feet, but the steps come up to the door and go by.*] If David and Michael was to come now an' go by — there bein' no sthar to guide thim!

THE WOMAN. Nay, mother, 'twas the shepherds that was guided by the sthar an' to the bed o' the Blessed Babe.

THE OLD WOMAN. Aye, so 'twas. What be I thinkin' of? The little Blessed Babe!

[*She smiles and sits staring at the stove again for a little.*] But they could not find Him tonight. 'Tis so dark an' no sthars shinin'. [*After another pause.*] An' what would shepherds do in a ghreat city? 'Twould be lost they'd be, quicker than in any bog. Think ye, Mary, that the boys would be hootin' thim an' the p'lice, maybe, would want to be aristin' thim for loitherin'. They'd niver find the Blessed Babe, an' they'd have to be movin' on. [*Another pause, and then there is the sound of approaching footsteps again. The Old Woman grasps the arms of her chair and leans forward, intently listening.*] That would sure be the girls this time! [*But again the footsteps go by. The Old Woman sighs.*] Ah, but 'tis weary waitin'! [*There is another long pause.*] 'Twas on that day that David an' me was plighted — a brave Christmas Day wid a shinin' sun an' a sky o' blue wid fair, white clouds. An' David an' me met at the early mass in the dark o' the frosty mornin' afore the sun rose — an' there was all day good times an' a duck for dinner and puddin's an' a party at the O'Brady's in the evenin', whin David an' me danced. Ah, but he was a beautiful dancer, an' me, too — I was as light on my feet as a fairy. [*She begins to croon an old dance tune and hobbles to her feet, and, keeping time with her head, tries a grotesque and feeble sort of dancing. Her eyes brighten and she smiles proudly.*] Aye, but I danced like a fairy, an' there was not another couple so sprightly an' handsome in all the country. [*She tires, and, looking pitiful and disappointed, hobbles back to*

her chair, and drops into it again.] Ah, but I be old now, and the strength fails me. [*She falls into silence for a few minutes.*] 'Twas the day before the next Christmas that Michael was born — the little man, the little white dove, my little son! [*There is a moment's pause, and then the pallid woman on the bed has a violent fit of coughing.*]

THE WOMAN. Mother, could ye get me a cup o' wather? If the girls was here to get me a bite to ate, maybe it would kape the breath in me the night.

THE OLD WOMAN [*starts and stares at her daughter, as if she hardly comprehended the present reality. She gets up and goes over to the window under which there is a pail full of water. She dips some out in a tin cup and carries it to her bed.*] Ye should thry to get up an' move about some, so ye can enjoy the Christmas threat. 'Tis bad bein' sick on Christmas. Thry, now, Mary, to sit up a bit. The girls'll be wantin' ye to be merry wid the rest av us.

THE WOMAN [*looking at her mother with a sad wistfulness.*] I wouldn't spoil things for the girls if I could help. Maybe, mother, if ye'd lift me a little I could sit up. [*The Old Woman tugs at her, and she herself tries hard to get into a sitting posture, but after some effort and panting for breath, she falls back again. After a pause for rest, she speaks gaspingly.*] Maybe I'll feel sthronger lather whin the girls come home — they could help me — [*with the plaint of longing in her voice*] they be so late! [*After another pause.*] Maybe I'll be sthrong again in

the mornin'— if I'd had a cup of coffee.— Maybe I could get up — an' walk about — an' do the cookin'. [*There is a knock at the door, and again they call, "Come in," in reedy, weak voices. There enters a little messenger boy in a ragged overcoat that reaches almost to his heels. His eyes are large and bright, his face pale and dirty, and he is fearfully tired and worn.*]

THE WOMAN. Why, Tim, boy, come in. Sit ye down an' rest, ye're lookin' weary.

THE OLD WOMAN. Come to the stove, Timmie, man, an' warm yourself. We always kape a warm room an' a bright fire for our visitors.

THE BOY. I was awful cold an' hungry an' I come home to get somethin' to eat before I started out on another trip, but my sisters ain't home from the store yit, an' the fire's gone out in the stove, an' the room's cold as outside. I thought maybe ye'd let me come in here an' git warm.

THE OLD WOMAN. Poor orphan! Poor lamb! To be shure ye shall get warm by our sthove.

THE BOY. The cars are so beastly col' an' so crowded a feller mostly has to stand on the back platform. [*The Old Woman takes him by the shoulder and pushes him toward the stove, but he resists.*]

THE BOY. No, thank ye — I don't want to go so near yet; my feet's all numb an' they allays hurt so when they warms up fast.

THE OLD WOMAN. Thin sit ye down off from the sthove. [*Moves the rocking-chair farther away from the stove for him.*]

THE BOY. If ye don't mind I'd rather stand on 'em 'til they gets a little used to it. They been numb off an' on mos' all day.

THE WOMAN. Soon as yer sisters come, Timmie, ye'd betther go to bed — 'tis the best place to get warm.

THE BOY. I can't — I got most a three-hour trip yet. I won't get home any 'fore midnight if I don't get lost, and maybe I'll get lost — I did onct out there. I've got to take a box o' 'Merican Beauty roses to a place eight mile out, an' the house ain't on the car track, but nearly a mile off, the boss said. I wisht they could wait till mornin', but the orders was they just got to get the roses to-night. You see, out there they don' have no gas goin' nights when there's a moon, an' there'd ought to be a moon to-night, on'y the clouds is so thick there ain't no light gets through.

THE OLD WOMAN. There's no sthar shinin' to-night, Tim. [*She shakes her head ominously. She goes to the window for the second time, opens it as before, and looks out. Shutting the window, she comes back and speaks slowly and sadly.*] Niver a sthar. An' the shepherds will be havin' a hard time, Tim, like you, findin' their way.

THE BOY. Shepherds? In town? What shepherds?

THE WOMAN. She manes the shepherds on Christmas Eve that wint to find the Blessed Babe, Jesus.

THE OLD WOMAN. 'Tis Christmas Eve, Timmie; ye haven't forgot that, have ye?

THE BOY. You bet I ain't. I know pretty well when Christmas is comin', by the way I got to hustle, an' the size of the boxes I got to carry. Seems as if my legs an' me would like to break up pardnership. I got to work till midnight every night, an' I'm so sleepy I drop off in the cars whenever I get a seat. An' the girls is at the store so early an' late they don't get time to cook me nothin' to eat.

THE WOMAN. Be ye hungry, Timmie?

THE BOY [*diffidently and looking at the floor*]. No, I ain't hungry now.

THE WOMAN. Be ye shure, Timmie?

THE BOY. Oh, I kin go till I git home.

THE WOMAN. Mother, can't you find something for him to ate?

THE OLD WOMAN. To be shure, to be shure. [*Bustling about.*] We always kapes a full cupboard to thrate our neighbors wid whin they comes in. [*She goes to the empty safe and fusses in it to find something. She pretends to be very busy, and then glances around at the boy with a sly look and a smile.*] Ah, Timmie, lad, what would ye like to be havin', now? If you had the wish o' yer heart for yer Christmas dinner an' a good fairy to set it all afore ye? Ye'd be wishin' maybe, for a fine roast duck, to begin wid, in its own gravies an' some apple sauce to go wid it; an' ye'd be thinkin' o' a little bit o' pig nicely browned an' a plate o' potatoes; an' the little fairy woman would be bringin' yer puddin's an' nuts an' apples an' a dish o' the swatest tay. [*The Boy smiles rather ruefully.*]

THE WOMAN. But, mother, you're not gettin' Tim something to ate.

THE BOY. She's makin' me mouth water all right. [*The Old Woman goes back to her search, but again turns about with a cunning look, and says to the boy:*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Maybe ye'll meet that little fairy woman out there in the counthry road where ye're takin' the roses! [*Nods her head knowingly, turning to the safe again.*] Here's salt an' here's pepper an' here's mustard an' a crock full o' sugar, an', oh! Tim, here's some fine cold bacon — fine, fat, cold bacon — an' here's half a loaf o' white wheat bread! Why, Timmie, lad, that's just the food to make boys fat! Ye'll grow famously on it. 'Tis a supper, whin ye add to it a dhrop o' iligant milk, that's fit for a king. [*She bustles about with great show of being busy and having much to prepare. Puts the plate of cold bacon upon the table where stands the stunted bit of an evergreen-tree, then brings the half-loaf of bread and cuts it into slices, laying pieces of bacon on the slices of bread. Then she pours out a glass of milk from a dilapidated and broken pitcher in the safe and brings it to the table, the Boy all the while watching her hungrily. At last he says rather apologetically to the woman.*]

THE BOY. I ain't had nothin' since a wiener-wurst at eleven o'clock.

THE OLD WOMAN. Now, dhraw up, Timmie, boy, an' ate yer fill; ye're more thin welcome. [*The boy does not sit down, but stands*

by the table and eats a slice of bread and bacon, drinking from the glass of milk occasionally.]

THE WOMAN. Don't they niver give ye nothin' to ate at the gran' houses when ye'd be takin' the roses?

THE BOY. Not them. They'd as soon think o' feedin' a telephone or an automobile as me.

THE WOMAN. But don't they ask ye in to get warm whin ye've maybe come so far?

THE BOY. No, they don't seem to look at me 'zacly like a caller. They generally steps out long enough to sign the receipt-book an' shut the front door behin' 'em so as not to let the house ge col' the length o' time I'm standin' there. Well, I'm awful much obleeged to ye. Now, I got to be movin' on.

THE OLD WOMAN. Sthop an' cilibrate the Christmas wid us. We ain't started to do nothin' yet because the girls haven't come — they know how [*nodding her head*] — an' they're goin' to bring things — all kinds o' good things to ate an' a branch of rowan berries — ah, boy, a great branch o' rowan wid scarlet berries shinin' [*gesticulating and with gleaming eyes*], an' we'll all be merry an' kape it up late into the night.

THE BOY [*in a little fear of her*]. I guess it's pretty late now. I got to make that trip an' I guess when I get home I'll be so sleepy I'll jus' tumble in. Ye've been awful good to me, an' it's the first time I been warm to-day. Good-by. [*He starts towards the door, but the Old Woman follows him and speaks to him coaxingly.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Ah, don't ye go, Michael, lad! Now, bide wid us a bit. [*The Boy, surprised at the name, looks queerly at the Old Woman, who then stretches out her arms to him, and says beseechingly:*] Ah, boy, ah, Mike, bide wid us, now ye've come! We've been that lonesome widout ye!

THE BOY [*frightened and shaking his head*]. I've got to be movin'.

THE OLD WOMAN. No, Michael, little lamb, no!

THE BOY [*almost terrified, watching her with staring eyes, and backing out*]. I got to go! [*The Boy goes out, and the Old Woman breaks into weeping, totters over to her old rocking-chair and drops into it, rocks to and fro, wailing to herself.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Oh, to have him come an' go again, my little Michael, my own little lad!

THE WOMAN. Don't ye, dearie; now, then, don't ye! 'Twas not Michael, but just our little neighbor boy, Tim. Ye know, por lamb, now if ye'll thry to remember, that father an' Michael is gone to the betther land an' us is left.

THE OLD WOMAN. Nay, nay, 'tis the fairies that took thim an' have thim now, kapin' thim an' will not ever give thim back.

THE WOMAN. Whisht, mother! Spake not of the little folk on the Holy Night! [*Crosses herself.*] Have ye forgot the time o' all the year it is? Now, dhry yer eyes, dearie, an' thry to be cheerful like fore the girls be comin' home. [*A noise is heard, the banging of a door and footsteps.*] Thim be the girls now, shure they

be comin' at last. [*But the sound of footsteps dies away.*] But they'll be comin' soon. [*Wearily, but with the inveterate hope.*]

[*The two women relapse into silence again, which is undisturbed for a few minutes. Then there is a knock at the door, and together in quavering, reedy voices, they call, "Come in," as before. There enters a tall, big, broad-shouldered woman with a cold, discontented, hard look upon the face that might have been handsome some years back; still, in her eyes, as she looks at the pallid woman on the bed, there is something that denotes a softness underneath it all.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Good avnin' to ye! We're that pleased to see our neighbors!

THE NEIGHBOR [*without paying any attention to the Old Woman, but entirely addressing the woman on the bed*]. How's yer cough?

THE WOMAN. Oh, it's jist the same — maybe a little betther. If I could on'y get to the counthry! But the girls must be workin'— they haven't time to take me. Sit down, won't ye? [*The Neighbor goes to the bed and sits down on the foot of it.*]

THE NEIGHBOR. I'm most dead, I'm so tired. I did two washin's to-day — went out and did one this mornin' and then my own after I come home this afternoon. I jus' got through sprinklin' it an' I'll iron to-morrow.

THE WOMAN. Not on Christmas Day!

THE NEIGHBOR [*with a sneer*]. Christmas Day! Did ye hear 'bout the Beckers? Well,

they was all put out on the sidewalk this afternoon. Becker's been sick, ye know, an' ain't paid his rent an' his wife's got a two weeks' old baby. It sort o' stunned Mis' Becker, an' she sat on one of the mattresses out there an' wouldn't move, an' nobody couldn't do nothin' with her. But they ain't the only ones has bad luck — Smith, the painter, fell off a ladder an' got killed. They took him to the hospital, but it wasn't no use — his head was all mashed in. His wife's got them five boys an' Smith never saved a cent, though he warn't a drinkin' man. It's a good thing Smith's children is boys — they can make their livin' easier!

THE WOMAN [*smiling faintly.*] Ain't ye got no cheerful news to tell? It's Christmas Eve, ye know.

THE NEIGHBOR. Christmas Eve don't seem to prevent people from dyin' an' bein' turned out o' house an' home. Did ye hear how bad the dipthery is? They say as how if it gits much worse they'll have to close the school in our ward. Two o' the Homan childern's dead with it. The first one wasn't sick but two days, an' they say his face all turned black 'fore he died. But it's a good thing they're gone, for the Homans ain't got enough to feed the other six. Did ye hear 'bout Jim Kelly drinkin' again? Swore off for two months, an' then took to it harder'n ever — perty near killed the baby one night.

THE WOMAN [*with a wan, beseeching smile*]. Won't you please not tell me any more? It just breaks me heart.

THE NEIGHBOR [*grimly*]. I ain't got no other kind o' news to tell. I s'pose I might's well go home.

THE WOMAN. No, don't ye go. I like to have ye here when ye're kinder.

THE NEIGHBOR [*fingering the bed clothes and smoothing them over the woman*]. Well, it's gettin' late, an' I guess ye ought to go to sleep.

THE WOMAN. Oh, no, I won't go to slape till the girls come. They'll bring me somethin' to give me strength. If they'd on'y come soon!

THE NEIGHBOR. Ye ain't goin' to set up 'til they git home?

THE OLD WOMAN. That we are. We're kapin' the cilebratin' till they come.

THE NEIGHBOR. What celebratin'?

THE OLD WOMAN. Why, the Christmas, to be shure. We're goin' to have high jinks to-night. In the ould counthry 'tis always Christmas Day, but here 'tis begun on Christmas Eve, an' we're on'y waitin' for the girls, because they know how to fix things betther nor Mary an' me.

THE NEIGHBOR [*staring*]. But ain't they workin' in the store?

THE OLD WOMAN. Yes, but they're comin' home early to-night.

THE NEIGHBOR [*laughing ironically*]. Don't ye fool yerselves. Why, they've got to work harder to-night than any in the whole year.

THE WOMAN [*wistfully*]. But they did say they'd thry to come home early.

THE NEIGHBOR. The store's all crowded to-night. Folks 'at's got money to spend never remembers it till the last minute. If they didn't

have none they'd be thinkin' 'bout it long ahead. Well, I got to be movin'. I wouldn't stay awake, if I was you.

THE OLD WOMAN. Sthay and kape the Christmas wid us! We'll be havin' high jinks by an' by. Sthay, now, an' help us wid our jollity!

THE NEIGHBOR. Nay, I left my children in bed, an' I got to go back to 'em. An' I got to get some rest myself — I got that ironin' ahead o' me in the mornin'. You folks better get yer own rest. [*She rises and walks to the door.*]

THE OLD WOMAN [*beamingly*]. David an' Michael's comin'. [*The Neighbor stands with her back against the door and her hand on the knob, staring at the Old Woman.*]

THE OLD WOMAN [*smiling rapturously*]. Yis, we're goin' to have a gran' time. [*The Neighbor looks puzzled and fearful and troubled, first at the Woman and then at the Old Woman. Finally, without a word, she opens the door and goes out.*]

THE OLD WOMAN [*going about in a tottering sort of dance.*] David an' Michael's comin' an' the shepherds for the fairies will show thim the way.

THE WOMAN. If the girls would on'y come! If they'd give me somethin' so as I wouldn't be so tired!

THE OLD WOMAN. There's niver a sthar an' there's nobody to give thim a kind word an' the counthry roads are dark an' foul, but they've got the little folk to guide thim! An' whin they reach the city — the poor, lonesome shepherds

from the hills! — they'll find naught but coldness an' hardness an' hurry. [*Questioningly.*] Will the fairies show thim the way? Fairies' eyes be used to darkness, but can they see where it is black night in one corner an' a blaze o' light in another? [*She goes to the window for the third time, opens it and leans far out for a long time, then turns about and goes on in her monotone, closing the window. She seems by this time quite to have forgotten the presence of the pallid woman on the bed, who has closed her eyes, and lies like one dead.*]

THE OLD WOMAN. Nay, there's niver a sthar, an' the clouds are hangin' heavier an' lower an' the flakes o' snow are fallin'. Poor little folk guidin' thim poor lost shepherds, leadin' thim by the hand so gently because there's no others to be kind to thim, an' bringin' thim to the manger o' the Blessed Babe. [*She comes over to her rocking-chair and again sits down in it, rocks slowly to and fro, nodding her head in time to the motion.*] Poor little mite of a babe, so cold an' unwelcome an' forgotten save by the silly ould shepherds from the hills! The silly ould shepherds from the strength o' the hills, who are comin' through the darkness in the lead o' the little folk! [*She speaks slower and lower, and finally drops into a quiet crooning—it stops and the Old Woman has fallen asleep.*]

[CURTAIN.]

[*While the curtain is down the pallid, sick woman upon the bed dies, the Old Woman being asleep does not notice the slight strug-*

gle with death. The fire has gone out in the stove, and the light in the lamp, and the stage is in complete darkness when the two girls come stumbling in. They are too tired to speak, too weary to show surprise that the occupants of the room are not awake. They fumble about, trying to find matches in the darkness, and finally discover them and a candle in the safe. They light the candle and place it upon the table by the scraggy little evergreen-tree. They turn about and discern their grandmother asleep in the rocking-chair. Hurriedly they turn to the bed and discover their mother lying there dead. For a full minute they stand gazing at her, the surprise, wonder, awe, misery increasing in their faces; then with screams they run to the bed, throw themselves on their knees and bury their faces, sobbing in the bedclothes at the Woman's feet.]

[CURTAIN.]

THE RING.

CHARACTERS AS THEY APPEAR.

HANNAH DODSLEY, *the wife of Peter.*
PETER DODSLEY, *actor and stockholder in the Globe Theater.*
KATHERINE DODSLEY, *their daughter.*
JOHN, WILLIAM, } *servants to the Dodsleys.*
MISTRESS CHETTLE, *friend to Mistress Dodsley.*
ROBIN WOODCOCK, *a young actor who takes women's parts.*
A GYPSY.
RICHARD POWELL, *a young playwright in love with Katherine.*
A TINKER.

TIME: The days of Shakespeare.
SCENE: The house of Peter Dodsley.

[*Peter Dodsley has been a successful theatrical producer and is well-to-do. He owns a goodly house that has almost handsome furniture and is neat and orderly, thanks to the care of his thrifty wife. Peter himself is a middle-aged man, given a little to portliness, smooth and well-kept, contented and humorous. He is very spruce and well-dressed in a suit of brown velvet. Hannah, his wife, is thin and shrill-tongued; she is over-dressed in a gown of*

many colors and she lacks a sense of humor, like the wives of men who have it. She takes life hard. The scene opens showing an extremely neat and well-furnished room. There are doors on either side and at the back. Hannah sits knitting in a high-backed oaken chair by an oaken table.]

PETER [*from behind scenes*]. I say! What hast thou done with my new cloak? Ho, madam!

HANNAH. Eh, well, what is't?

PETER [*coming out carrying his hat, gloves, etc.*]. My new cloak, as thou well knowest, brought home but yesterday at sundown from the shop by the tailor's boy and by noon to-day swallowed up in the cavernous maw of thy excellent housekeeping. When thou art in heaven wilt thou go about picking stray flying feathers molted from the angels' wings, and pile away all the harps and crowns in neat rows on the cupboard shelves?

HANNAH. Thou talkest of heaven too intimately, Peter. It becomes thee ill.

PETER. But my new coat becomes me out of all seeming. If thou couldst but find it, dear dame, and see me properly housed in it, then thou wouldst love me as sweetly as on that May-day when thy round cheeks blossomed at sight of my adorable curled locks. Dost thou remember, sweetheart, how madly thou didst fall in love with me?

[*He stalks about the room and finding Katherine's ring on the mantel shelf he picks it up and puts it on without, however, attract-*

ing the attention of Hannah, who goes on industriously knitting and heeding him not.]

HANNAH. Beshrew me, not I. 'Twas thou that couldst not bear to let me out of thy sight ten minutes running, and vowed to swallow poison or jump into the Thames if I would not marry thee.

PETER. Now what a fool I was! But that is of small matter when the players are all awaiting me at the theater and I must have my new cloak or go shamefaced in mine ancient rags and tatters.

HANNAH. Thou art late as usual?

PETER. They do not begin the play till I arrive, therefore I am not late.

HANNAH. And goest in mad hurry as ever?

PETER. Nay, good wife [*striking an attitude of repose*], *that* is a sin that even thou couldst not impute to me.

HANNAH. And hast left thy bedroom turned upside down and all thy clothing in disorderly heaps upon the floor?

PETER. All, save my new cloak. Thou wilt find the rest as thou hast predicted. But, sweet coney, I must be gone. Try to put thy mind upon my new cloak rather than upon the more unprofitable ancient livery. If thou wouldst put half as much attention upon it as upon ferreting out my more unworthy qualities, 'twould be here in a trice.

HANNAH. Why dost thou not find it for thyself?

PETER. Art thou angling for sugared compliments, sweetheart? For thou dost know that I

know and that every one knows that there was but one thing ever in all the world that I could find well — and that a fair wife. [*He waits for this to sink in.*] Whereas thou couldst ever find anything that was ever lost — even to a rich man's soul.

[*Katherine comes in. She is some twenty summers old, fair and slender and lovely, what her mother might have been at her age, but with her father's intelligence and wit. She is simply clad in white and has blue eyes and gold brown hair — a Judith Shakespeare, if you please.*]

HANNAH. Katherine, go fetch your father's new cloak.

KATHERINE [*to her father*]. Where is it, sir?

PETER. Forsooth, that is the question I have asked resolutely for an hour past.

HANNAH. It is on the second shelf from the bottom of the closet in thy father's bedroom. Hasten, he is very late.

PETER [*with a wink at her*]. What a brief memory thou hast, Kate, for 'twas surely thou that packed away my cloak since neither I nor thy mother knew aught about it. [*Kate goes out smiling.*]

HANNAH. 'Tis a most expensive cloak thou hast bought. Thou spendest money as if thou wert Lord Mayor of London.

PETER. And thou shalt have as fine a gown of flame colored taffeta as the Lord Mayor's lady, for the theater does passing well and I have money to my purse.

HANNAH. It irks me to buy mine apparel with money fetched from the theater.

PETER. Thou shouldst not have a soul so sensitive. 'Twas ever thought good work and will be ever by pious Christians, to take money from the devil and give it to a better man.

HANNAH. Thou consortest there with a pack of scape-graces, and roysterers, tavern-brawlers, pick-purses, thieves, villains, rascals, rogues,—

PETER. Hold, hold! Thou dost fill the jail faster — and with my companions and familiar friends — than doth the judge. Alack, alack! And hang London bridge thicker with heads than raindrops in April. [*As Katherine comes in again carrying his cloak.*] Ah, Kate, thy mother would have us all notorious villains, but, beshrew me, still is there sport in life and ginger is hot i' the mouth. To-day we play Will Shakespeare's merry comedy of "Twelfth Night," and so [*putting on his cloak*], "Anon, sir, I'll be gone, sir, I'll be with you again in a trice, like to the old vice "— [*he goes on out singing in a full, rich, merry voice*].

[*Katherine and Hannah, being left alone, Katherine goes about the room hunting silently and distractedly, while Hannah talks.*]

HANNAH. Dame Chettle hath a new gown. [*Pause.*]

Of wondrous heavy silk. [*Pause.*]

'Tis brocaded. [*Pause, Hannah glances at Katherine.*]

The sleeves are deeply slashed. [*Pause.*]

And lined with yellow taffeta. [*Pause.*]

'Tis of a grass green color. [*Pause. She glances again at Kate.*]

I mean the gown itself. [*Pause.*]

And laced with scarlet ribbons. [*Pause. She looks sharply at Kate.*

And trimmed with richest lace. [*Pause.*]

The whole gown is most richly broidered with gold. [*Pause.*] Some might think Dame Chettle's figure too short and round to wear a gown so ornamented. Some might think she would not carry it off well. [*Pause.*] Gramercy, Kate, what aileth thee? [*Katherine starts but goes on hunting distractedly.*] Dost thou not care about Dame Chettle's gown?

KATHERINE [*bursting into tears*]. I care not about Dame Chettle's gown, nor Dame Chettle's taste, nor Dame Chettle's figure, nor anything that is Dame Chettle's. I've lost my ring!

HANNAH. Now, Katherine Dodsley, what wilt be telling me?

KATHERINE. I've lost my ring that Richard gave me.

HANNAH. Thou dost not mean to tell me truly that thou hast lost thy ring?

KATHERINE. Dost thou think I would be making up such a tale for thy pleasure?

HANNAH. Where didst thou lose it?

KATHERINE. If I but knew!

HANNAH. When didst thou lose it?

KATHERINE. If I but knew!

HANNAH. Nay, but how didst thou lose it?

KATHERINE. Nay, and if I but knew!

HANNAH. Didst thou have it at dinner?

KATHERINE. Yes, I think so.

HANNAH. Then thou must have dropped it into the dish of stewed prunes.

KATHERINE. Nay, mother, how could I?

HANNAH. Then mayhap it slipped off when thou wast picking a chicken wing. Or more like it slid off into the trencher and was carried out. Run and find it in the trencher.

KATHERINE. Nay, I must use all my wits to discover how this thing chanced. [*She stands in deep thought.*]

HANNAH. As if thinking would find the ring! [*Jumping to her feet.*] Hunt for it, to be sure, hunt for it! It must have fallen on the floor. [*She walks around stooping and peering.*] Now must I find the ring, for if it were left to thy father or thee, it would never be detected. [*Katherine hunts, too, they bump into each other, and finally are both down on their hands and knees, when a man servant looks in at the door. They are embarrassed, he averts his eyes, grins and retreats. This is John, a young, thin, red-haired man with obtrusive joints and great awkwardness. He grins always and is a stupid, merry lout.*]

HANNAH [*calling*]. John, come hither. [*John enters, shamefaced and awkward, fingering his cap, and trying hard not to laugh.*] John, your young mistress hath lost a ring. [*John ducks.*] We were looking for it on the floor [*John ducks again and pulls his foretop*], thinking it might have dropped. You may continue the search. [*John ducks, then looks at her enquiringly.*] Yes, on the floor. [*John immediately sprawls on his knees. Katherine con-*

tinues to hunt. Hannah sits with dignity on her chair, as before, but finally the dignity gives way to curiosity, and she is soon down on her knees again. Another servant pokes his head in at the door, is surprised, abashed, but curious, and retires with evident reluctance. This is William. He is very tall, lean, and dark, with a trifle more brains than John and overweighted with the seriousness of everything. Both men are dressed in dull-colored clothing, very short smocks which give prominence to their awkward legs. Hannah takes her chair again with the assumption of great dignity and calls William to come back.]

HANNAH. William, come hither. [*William enters, awkward, serious but curious.*] William, your young mistress hath lost her ring and we were all looking for it, thinking, perchance, it had dropped to the floor. [*William ducks and pulls his foretop.*] 'Tis a most costly ring.

KATHERINE. Oh, I would not lose it for all the wealth of all the Indies!

HANNAH. 'Twas given her by Master Richard Powell.

WILLIAM [*pulling his foretop with great earnestness.*] A most notable gentleman.

HANNAH. And we have endeavored to find it. Do you search diligently with John. [*William with slower and more elaborate awkwardness sprawls upon the floor and the search goes on as before, Dame Dodsley joining in and is upon her hands and knees looking under a settle, when a knock is heard at the door and Dame Chettle comes immediately bustling in and is*

amazed at the scene. Dame Chettle is very short, very fat, very waddling. She is continually out of breath and she wears a very gay gown.]

HANNAH [*getting up into her chair as before and assuming an air of great dignity*]. Good day to you, Mistress Chettle.

DAME CHETTLE. Good day to you.

HANNAH. You see us in sore straits and great confusion. My daughter hath lost a ring.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh!

HANNAH. 'Tis a most costly ring.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh!

HANNAH. 'Twas given her by Master Richard Powell, whom as you know she will marry soon.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh!

HANNAH. It came from Italy. Katherine, did thy ring not come from Italy?

KATHERINE. Truly it came from Italy. Richard bought it of a sea captain who had it from an Italian gentleman in Venice.

DAME CHETTLE [*with large, staring eyes*]. Oh!

KATHERINE. 'Tis gold —

HANNAH [*interrupting*]. Very ancient and heavy and fine.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh!

KATHERINE. Set with pearls —

HANNAH [*interrupting*]. Very large and elegant and fair.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh!

HANNAH. And she dropped it on the floor after dinner.

KATHERINE. Nay, mother, I am not sure. I think it is not on the floor.

HANNAH. Without question, 'tis on the floor — where else?

KATHERINE. Nay, I am convinced it is not on the floor.

HANNAH. Assuredly 'tis on the floor. William and John, make haste!

WILLIAM [*rolling over and sitting up on the floor and pulling his front lock of hair towards Dame Dodsley*]. Mistress, a thief went by the house —

HANNAH. Then he has taken the ring. William and John, make haste. You slow, lazy, stupid varlets! Follow him — run! [*They scramble to their feet.*]

KATHERINE. Wait a little. When did he pass?

WILLIAM. But an hour ago.

KATHERINE. Was he an Egyptian?

WILLIAM. Aye, was he that — an Egyptian, notably black.

HANNAH. Then he has the ring. Run, make haste, seek him out!

[*William and John scamper off.*]

KATHERINE. Mother, hast thou any notion whither this Egyptian went and how they may discover him?

HANNAH. Now why didst thou not speak of that sooner? They have undoubtedly taken the wrong way, being so witless. I will after them and put them on the right way. [*She rushes out.*]

DAME CHETTLE. And will she know the right way?

KATHERINE [*smiling*]. No. [*She hopelessly shakes her head with a smile.*]

DAME CHETTLE. And will she take it?

KATHERINE. Assuredly not.

DAME CHETTLE. Then I'd best be after her to put her off the wrong track.

[*She bustles out and runs smack into Robin Woodcock as she turns round at the door. Robin is an exceedingly beautiful young fellow, blue-eyed, slender, lithe, graceful, yet with not a jot of effeminacy in his make-up. He is dressed in a sort of Robin Hood costume of hunter's green and dark deep rose, and has a large cock's feather in his cap, which he doffs and bows with sweeping ceremony to Mistress Chettle, who has the breath completely knocked out of her.*]

ROBIN. Gramercy! Save us all! I beg your pardon, Mistress Chettle. [*She gives him a withering look, is too breathless for words, and waddles on out.*] Katherine, what means all this? Has thy house, being crazy, infected the neighborhood? First I meet thy two men running like mad and would not wait though the devil himself would offer them sack. Then do I meet thy mother, breathless and speechless — a sorry plight for a woman. And then I run into that winsome fairy, Mistress Chettle, and she glares at me as if I, being the foul fiend, were the cause of all this undoing.

KATHERINE. Oh, Robin, make no mock of us! I am sore distracted. I have lost my ring.

ROBIN. Your ring. What ring?

KATHERINE. Oh, the only ring of any con-

sequence in the whole world. The ring Richard gave me.

ROBIN [*rolling his eyes*]. Then may heaven help us!

KATHERINE [*half laughing, she makes for him and shakes him by the shoulders.*] Thou little knave, I will not have thee make a mock of me!

ROBIN. Mock of thee? When would I ever dare? I was only thinking how unfortunate it is that the ring was not my gift, the which thou mightest the more easily dispense with. See now, how thou mightest be advantaged if thou hadst taken my little ring?

KATHERINE. Therein, Robin, thou tellest a truth that no maid listens to nor ever will. Things that are softly won and surely kept are valued less than the more difficult. 'Tis true of precious stones and true of human hearts. Perhaps the difficulty adds a zest — who knows? At least to some of us simplicity and ease are not the charms to steal away our hearts, though well we know that with them lies content. The keenest joys are always dearly bought.

ROBIN. Which means that Richard hath a temper.

KATHERINE. Richard is intricate. He doth combine the lion and the lamb. And while you fondle the soft lamb, you must have a care that the lion doth not eat you up. [*She says this as one tells the end of a fairy tale to a child, with great eyes and a frightening voice.*] I fear to have him learn his ring is gone, for he hath a fund of jealousy I would might be converted into something more useful.

ROBIN. Jealousy is convertible into nothing save tears.

KATHERINE. Why, Robin, thou art as dreary as a winter's rain and quite as comforting.

ROBIN. But there is no cause for jealousy in this?

KATHERINE. A jealous heart is apt to misconstrue the smallest things. Richard thinks my love for him not deep enough. He believes that his for me could compass mine about a thousand times.

ROBIN. I see. Thy sighs do not reach down to thy toes and the earth beneath, as his do.

KATHERINE [*smiling*]. Thou hast caught the spirit of it. He thinks me careless, shallow, unconcerned. If he but knew how dear I tender him! To lose his ring will grieve him past endurance.

ROBIN. How do you think 'twas lost?

KATHERINE. I do not know. I have no remembrance when I wore it last or where I may have ta'en it off. Therein is Richard right — I am negligent, a sorry fault for which I must now suffer.

ROBIN. Thou hast searched for it?

KATHERINE. Oh, everywhere.

ROBIN. It will be found, and in the meantime do not let Richard know 'tis gone.

KATHERINE. Suppose he asks for it?

ROBIN. Say I have it.

KATHERINE. Thou?

ROBIN. Yes, say I took it in sport to tease thee and thou couldst not get it back.

KATHERINE. I fear that would make sore trouble.

ROBIN. Nay, he could not blame thee, and as for me, I will win him by soft conceits and cozen him with jests.

KATHERINE. I do misdoubt it. I would not have thee drawn into my sad entanglement, Robin.

[*A noise is heard without, clamoring and shrill voices, and Mistress Dodsley enters, followed by Mistress Chettle, and after them William and John.*]

HANNAH. They took the wrong road even as I predicted and the Egyptian escaped.

DAME CHETTLE [*panting and dropping into a chair*]. Oh, my! Oh, my!

HANNAH. Shame upon you for witless knaves, stupid as monkeys! [*William and John hang their heads and look sheepish.*] The Egyptian has the ring without doubt.

ROBIN. If they took the wrong road, why then is there left the right road.

HANNAH. William and John, dost hear what Master Woodcock says?

WILLIAM [*pulling his forelock*]. A most notable gentleman.

ROBIN. Then why not forth again, this time upon the right road?

HANNAH. Dost hear, William and John? Try the other way, which is the right way. A most sensible thought.

WILLIAM. A most notable conception.

HANNAH [*furiously stamping at them*]. Then stand not there like immovable goats, but

get you gone! Forth! Make haste! [*William and John take to their heels. Mistress Chettle has been puffing and blowing all this time, sitting on the settle. Hannah drops into a chair for a moment, apparently exhausted, but jumps up again and starts to the door after the men.*] Dost thou think [*to Robin*] that they will inevitably take the right road this time?

ROBIN [*soberly*]. I should think there were grave doubt.

HANNAH. Then must I be after them again. A stupid man is more intractable than a balking donkey. [*She goes hurriedly out.*]

DAME CHETTLE. Now does she know the right road?

ROBIN. The right road seems not yet wholly unavoidable.

DAME CHETTLE. And will she take it?

ROBIN. Judging from inference from the past, I should think probably not.

DAME CHETTLE. Then I ought to be after and tell her so. [*She waddles out and Robin and Kate, left alone, gaze at each other.*]

ROBIN. Wilt thou after them, Kate, to show them the right road?

KATHERINE. Nay, and if they take not the right road this time, still will the right road be left.

ROBIN. A cheerful thought. Hope perches on thy window-sill. Now, let us sit down and reason out what 'twere best to do. [*Robin takes Kate by the hand and leads her to the settle, where they sit down, Robin leaning over with elbows on his knees, thinking.*]

KATHERINE. Robin, thou art a wise little knave beyond thy years.

ROBIN. I thank thee, and yet years have a way of creeping up, to anything even such wisdom as I possess. Soon will I be too old to play the woman and then —

KATHERINE. Why, then wilt thou play the man. Rosalind will have married Orlando and the twain be one.

ROBIN. Dost thou think so? Then, if ambition doth not o'erleap itself I, the boy who plays Ophelia, will become the man to play Hamlet.

KATHERINE. Now, by my troth, thou art a brave little cock. I delight to hear thee crow — my little Cock Robin. Ah, me, I had almost forgot there were such a sad thing in the world as a ring — alas, that it must be so generally expressed and not more particularly placed upon my finger. I do not believe 'tis stolen and yet I have searched the house most carefully for it. Heaven forfend that Richard come until it be found.

ROBIN. If he does, leave him to me.

[*A noise is heard. It comes nearer, a gruff protesting, and Dame Dodsley's high-pitched tones are audible above the hub-bub.*]

HANNAH [*without*]. Nay, we will search thee. Come along, thou thievish knave. Thou hast it on thy person. [*They break into the room, Mistress Dodsley first, backing in with her face toward the men, William and John, who are pulling along a Gypsy. Dame Chettle last.*] Here is the thief. I spied him from afar, and he made no attempt to escape, knowing his guilt.

[*Dame Chettle, panting laboriously, drops into a chair, the two men clutch the Gypsy, who scowls and looks sullen.*] Now, sir, produce the ring.

GYPSY. I have it not.

HANNAH [*raising her hands*]. Now what a liar thou art!

WILLIAM. A most notable liar.

HANNAH. Produce the ring, I say.

GYPSY. I have it not.

HANNAH. Thou false wretch, to deny having the ring when thou wert caught in the very act of taking it.

WILLIAM. A most notable wretch.

HANNAH. Produce the ring, I say. Make no more delay.

GYPSY. I can not produce that which I have not.

HANNAH. Thou bold-faced knave.

WILLIAM. A most notable knave.

HANNAH. If thou wilt not produce the ring, forthwith, I will have thee searched. [*The Gypsy makes no answer to this but looks even more angry and sullen. William and John clutch his arms the tighter.*] What, dost thou still refuse? Then, William and John, take his wallet from him. [*There is a long scuffle in which John at last gains the wallet and is about to hand it to Dame Dodsley.*] Give the wallet to Master Woodcock. Let him examine the contents of this soiled receptacle. [*She shudders from the thing to her so filthy. Robin takes it, turning out odd bits of coin, string, glass, ribbon, a charm, etc.*]

ROBIN. The ring is not in this.

KATHERINE. I do not think he has the ring. [*Kindly.*]

HANNAH. Assuredly he has the ring! 'Tis elsewhere secreted about his person, and he must be thoroughly searched. Search him, William and John. [*They begin to search the Gypsy, who resists.*]

GYPSY. Let be — I know naught of your ring.

HANNAH. Search him diligently. [*They clutch him, the Gypsy resists violently, and after a long and desperate struggle, he finally twists himself free from the men, makes a break for the door, and runs away, leaving them in awkward attitudes of great surprise and dismay.*]

DAME CHETTLE. Oh, my! Oh, my!

HANNAH [*almost shrieking*]. Now out upon you for careless fools! You are as slow as a snail and let him slip through your fingers as if you had no more of them than hath a snail.

JOHN. 'Twould take as many fingers, Mistress, as hath a spider to hold such an eel.

WILLIAM. A most notable eel.

HANNAH. And even now you let him be running as fast as his heels can carry him. Catch him, I say — after him and catch him!

KATHERINE. Nay, mother, do not trouble him more. I do not think he has the ring.

JOHN. We passed a tinker. Methought he had the ring.

HANNAH. Why thought you that?

JOHN. 'Twas when we first went out to catch the Gypsy, and the tinker looked cunningly at the house.

ROBIN. Tinkers were thieves and tricksters ever.

WILLIAM. Oh, most notable tricksters.

HANNAH. I' faith I almost think he has the ring.

ROBIN. 'Tis like enough.

HANNAH. Let us forth and set upon his track. Perhaps we will meet again with that lying, thieving Egyptian. Forward, William and John, there is no time to lose.

[*She goes out, followed by the two men, and Dame Chettle waddles in the rear of the procession. Robin and Kate look at each other and then both burst out laughing. Kate throws herself into the settle.*]

KATHERINE. Oh, Robin, I think I am not merry; I think I am mad, rather.

ROBIN [*with assumed dismay*]. The one is the most diabolical counterfeit of the other. Now hath the fiend laid hold on thee.

KATHERINE. Truly, I almost believe it. I am so tormented. I dread Richard's coming.

ROBIN. If he comes, be rid of him.

KATHERINE. Be rid of Richard?

ROBIN. Send him away.

KATHERINE [*haughtily*]. That I would not do if I so desired and I do not so desire.

ROBIN. Oh, very well, then, take him for a walk and leave me here to settle with your mother.

KATHERINE. I fear you do not know my mother.

[*A noise of footsteps is heard outside and*

Richard Powell enters. Seeing Robin, he sings some words from "Twelfth Night."

He is a tall, handsome, dark-eyed, pale and frowning young man. He is dressed somewhat foppishly in a suit of purple with deep yellow trimming, and possesses evidently an overabundance of egotism with much importance of manner.]

RICHARD [*singing*]. "Ho, Robin, jolly Robin, tell me where my lady is?" [*To Kate.*] Greeting to thee, my lady and my love. [*He kisses her hand, she giving him her right and keeping the left safely tucked away behind her.*]

KATHERINE. Dear Richard [*putting her left arm around his neck, then when he attempts to take this hand she withdraws it*], I am so glad thou hast come, for I have not tasted the air today and would like so much to have a walk.

RICHARD. And is that the reason you are glad to see me? [*Offended.*]

KATHERINE [*coyly*]. Nay, that is not all the reason.

RICHARD [*smiling*]. Suppose I will not take thee?

KATHERINE [*winningly*]. Then must I entreat thee.

RICHARD [*with feigned sternness*]. Then would I be very obdurate — to be so entreated. [*Settles himself back in a chair and folds his arms.*] Go on, entreat me.

KATHERINE. The day is fair, my lord.

RICHARD. Thou art my day, and fair to me alway.

KATHERINE. The air is fresh, my lord.

RICHARD. Not fresher than thy smile which doth me here beguile.

KATHERINE. But, oh, the sky above the fields is blue, my lord.

RICHARD. The sky is not more blue than is my sweetheart true.

KATHERINE. Here dost thou hear no tune of birds, my lord.

RICHARD. Here do I hear thy words, sweeter than tune of birds.

KATHERINE. There wouldst thou have all these and me beside.

RICHARD. And sweet must these things be ta'en through the love of thee.

KATHERINE. Then wilt thou come, my lord?

RICHARD. Forsooth thou dost entreat, then must I come, my sweet.

KATHERINE. Put it all into a play, Richard, for thou wilt some day come to comedy when that tragedy hath made thee care more for the little merry things of life. Comfort each other whilst that I am gone for my hat.

[*She kisses him lightly on the brow and goes out.*]

RICHARD. Robin, my lad, is she not rare?

ROBIN. So rare I almost think thou dost not hold her high enough.

RICHARD. Nay, 'twere impossible to hold her higher than I do. I know that all virtues reside in her. As beauty hath fashioned her without so goodness hath appointed her within. Fair and lovely as the rose is she, and as the

fragrance of the rose, her soul exhales in thought and deed. The spirit of gentleness, methinks, did hover over all the earth when she was born. Oh, 'tis a thing beyond the dreams of happiness to have a being so perfect love me.

ROBIN [*looking at him intently*]. Thou must take great joy in her sure faith.

RICHARD. That is the best of all — I can believe in her. I can rely upon her truth with never a question. I lie upon her faith as on a bed of violets.

ROBIN. A poet's answer. Yet a bed of violets might damp thy coat or spirits if too long indulged in.

RICHARD [*smiling*]. Thou art too young to be converted to a lover's faith. When thou art older then thou wilt not make a mock of sentiment. Wert thou not at the play this afternoon?

ROBIN. No, not to-day. Thou wast there?

RICHARD. Yes, and sat upon the stage not to show a brave new doublet nor a handsome cloak as I so often have seen others do, and not to flout the actors or make jests and air a very vain and foolish wit, but rather to listen with a mind intent upon the marvelous words. I forget the din and rudeness of the pit, the lordings' idle show, the roughness of the stage, and only hear the play, which as it doth proceed, doth ever grow and glow like to a May sunrise when fields and hills and streams are fresh and fair and full of joy.

[*Katherine returns with her hat on, her left glove on, the right one in her hand.*]

RICHARD [*to Kate*].

Now is crabbed winter flown,
And grasses spring,
And little birds sing,
When the queen of the spring
Doth come to her own.

ROBIN. May I wait to see your father?

KATHERINE. He is late and may have gone to the Mermaid with the other actors for supper. I like not to leave thee so alone.

ROBIN. If he does not come soon, then I will go to find him.

KATHERINE. Then good-by. Find a book to read and make thyself at home.

RICHARD. Good-by, dear lad.

ROBIN. Farewell, friends. [*They go out and he walks about the room humming to himself, and finally picks up a book and begins to read, stretching himself out on the settle. He suddenly stops reading, and sits up thinking. He reaches over to the table and feels all over it, displacing things. Finally he gets up and hunts about, going down on his hands and knees and peering about on the floor. A noise is heard. He listens. It becomes perceptible as several voices, the high tones of Hannah distinguishable above the others. Robin is intent, anxious, yet smiling. The yells of a man are heard: "Let me be! Off with you, thou dost hurt me!" and so on, and then the stern voice of Richard Powell. Robin takes up his book, resumes his seat, and pretends to be reading abstractedly when they all burst into the room, Hannah first, then the*

two men dragging the Tinker, then Richard looking like a thunder-cloud, then Katherine, and at last Dame Chettle, red-faced and panting.]

HANNAH [*very excitedly*]. Here we have the thief at last. Beshrew me, but I thought we should never catch him; he did run so.

DAME CHETTLE. Oh, my! Oh, my! [*She drops down into a chair, panting and fanning herself.*]

HANNAH. He hath heels like a coursing hound —

WILLIAM. A most notable hound.

[*The Tinker raises his ragged heel and looks at it with a grimace.*]

HANNAH. And when we did at last have him in our hands — John caught him first by the tail of his coat, which gave way like the shell from an egg [*the Tinker looks around and surveys the remnant of the tail of his coat with another grimace*], and it seemed well nigh impossible to grasp any corner of him, but when at last we did have him 'twas as if we had him not — he screwed and twisted like a hyena —

WILLIAM. A most notable hyena.

[*The Tinker suddenly assumes a horribly fierce look and jumps at them as if he would bite them, at which they all spring back and shriek and the servants almost lose their hold of him.*]

ROBIN. Art thou sure that this is the thief?

HANNAH. 'Tis morally certain. He doth not deny it.

TINKER. Nay, then, I am a thief, but not that thief.

HANNAH. What dost thou mean with thy hyperboles?

TINKER. I mean that your thief being elsewhere, I am not he.

HANNAH. But you have the ring.

TINKER. Nay, not that ring. That ring being elsewhere, I have it not.

HANNAH. I will not listen to thy idle talk. The long and the short of it is, thou must give up the ring.

TINKER. The long of it is the ring, being further off. And the short of it is I, being short of the ring.

ROBIN. Why, excellent Tinker, thou dost tinker with words as with pewter pans.

HANNAH. I say to thee, produce the ring.

TINKER. Now how may I product that which I did not abduct?

HANNAH. If thou dost not give up the ring of thy own accord, I will have thee searched.

TINKER. Now I am a truthful Tinker and though I be a thief, an honest thief, and my honesty importunes me to acknowledge that I did not take the ring.

HANNAH. Search him, William and John. [*They begin the search.*]

TINKER. Now doth the Bible say truly that from a man that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.

ROBIN. Nay, perchance he told the truth.

HANNAH. He is a lying, thieving Tinker.

ROBIN. But here is the one sunny spot in his dark life. He has not the ring because I have the ring.

KATHERINE [*starting*]. No, no!

RICHARD [*who has preserved a gloomy silence with arms folded, at the back of the room, now strides forward to Robin.*] Thou hast the ring?

ROBIN. Gramercy, yes, who else?

RICHARD. How had you it?

ROBIN. Nay, Richard, do not glare so. I took it in a jest to tease thy sweetheart, who is so foolish fond of thee, and she, fearing thy anger against me, would not avouch my guilt. Sure, thou starest as at the seven deadly sins.

RICHARD. Thou little piece of impudence, dost thou think that thou canst batten on my love for thee and take advantage of it and of thy youth?

KATHERINE. Oh, Richard, believe him not. He did not take the ring. What happened to it I can not truly tell, but I have lost the ring and he has not the ring.

ROBIN. She would but excuse my fault.

RICHARD. You have the ring?

ROBIN. I have the ring.

RICHARD. Then give it up to me before I strike you down.

ROBIN. Thy words are full of menace and of hate.

RICHARD [*striding up and down after Robin, who keeps just out of his way*]. Provoke me not further but give up the ring.

ROBIN. Keep hands off me and cool thine anger down.

RICHARD. Thou little cockscomb, thou foolhardy wight! To dream that thou couldst come between me and my love. Thou vain and fool-

ish boy to dare affront me and meddle with affairs thou art witless of! Thou contemptuous small fool and worse than fool, for deception doth sit upon thy back. [*He works himself into a fury and strides after Robin, who continually evades him.*]

KATHERINE. Oh, Richard, I beseech thee!

RICHARD. Speak not to me, you did deceive me, too.

KATHERINE. Nay, dear!

RICHARD. I say you did.

KATHERINE. Oh, Richard, can you speak so to me?

RICHARD. How have you used me? How have you abused the love I bore you?

KATHERINE. Never, Richard, never.

RICHARD. Aye, but you have. Never deceive me more. Do not entreat me. I will forego you. I must avoid one who is so slight of heart. One who could connive in affection with — [*to Robin*] — Oh, thou young rogue, to make a mock of things too sacred far for thy shallow understanding! How mine anger waxes at sight of thy impertinent rosy cheek!

KATHERINE. Oh, sir, I implore thee! He did not take the ring. Go on, search the Tinker.

HANNAH. To be sure, search the Tinker.

RICHARD. Thou dost need a lesson and a punishment and I'll give it thee, thou little meddlesome villain, thou! [*He strikes at Robin and grabs him by the collar.*]

KATHERINE. Oh, do not hurt him! [*Hannah shrieks and Dame Chettle screams.*]

DAME CHETTLE. Oh, my! Oh, my!

[*The Tinker yells as one of the men pinches him, they having gone on with their work of searching him. The door opens in all this tumult and Peter Dodsley enters.*]

PETER. Good folk, good folk! What devil pursueth you?

[*They all start and stand stock-still. Richard drops Robin. Peter's eye ranges round the room and lights on Mistress Chettle.*]

PETER. Why? Mistress Chettle, thou art as breathless as the air before a summer storm. But it would seem the others were not without wind to their whistles, if I might judge from the hubbub I heard as I approached the door.

KATHERINE. Father, my ring is gone.

HANNAH. First it fell in the dish of stewed prunes, and then it was dropped in the trencher, and then it was dropped on the floor, and then an Egyptian took it —

WILLIAM. Notably black.

HANNAH. And then this Tinker here, whom we were searching even now.

KATHERINE. And then little Robin, to shield me, said he stole it in jest. Richard is angry. Dear father, speak to him! Pacify him!

PETER. And it was taken in jest?

RICHARD. A very sorry jest.

PETER. Poor Richard, thou wert fashioned for tragedy. Yet, methinks, thou wilt never understand tragedy until thou hast produced a sense of comedy. Heaven defend thee, Kate, from such a cross-grained husband as Dick is like to make. Poor little Robin! Come, make friends with him, Dick. What! 'Twas only a jest?

A jocund jest? Shall there be no more laughter because one, Master Richard Powell, is melancholy? Come, Dick, come, my sweet Dick, thou wilt forgive a jest?

RICHARD. Some jests are not to be forgiven.

PETER. Then am I in sad plight, for I forsooth, have played a jest even like to this.

KATHERINE. But Robin did not take the ring.

PETER. Why, then have you all been ringed round by a trickster and followed a circle of mistakes. Now who must have the ring? My good wife says the Tinker has the ring, and the Tinker's answer rings true though he says he has not the ring. Kate declares that Robin lacks the ring and Robin vows he has the ring. Richard doth solemnly declare he wants the ring and I as solemnly protest I have the ring. [*Holding it up to the view of them all.*] We did need a ring for a property in the merry comedy of "Twelfth Night" this afternoon, and I, to tease my girl, my Kate, took hers without her knowledge or her commendation. The ring — why, 'tis a rare little ring — did commend itself. Forsooth, Richard, canst thou now forgive a jest or will you refuse me for a father-in-law?

RICHARD. 'I faith, sir, if I had but known who did it!

PETER. 'I faith, dear Dick, then learn to take a jest where it doth find thee, and give possession where it doth belong. [*He gives Richard the ring and carries his hand to that of Kate.*] Those who had the ring this afternoon in the play were fain to say they wanted it not, and those who had it not were quite sure they

wanted it. So wags the world. And I, lacking my supper, am quite sure I want it. So, dear dame, let me ask these friends to sup with us here and now. And — [*his eye being attracted to the Tinker*] let all poor wights assembled here have benefit of the mischance that brought them hither.

[CURTAIN.]

THE ROSE.

SIR RICHARD, *a young nobleman.*
THE LADY SILVIA.
EUSTACE, *a page.*

[SCENE: *An apartment — a tower room, perhaps — at the end of a long windy hall in a castle of the time of Elizabeth. It has two entrances, the larger is at the back of the stage heavily curtained, the smaller at the extreme left is like a secret door and is also curtained. The furniture is weighty dark oak deeply carved, there are heavy hangings, and tapestry and armor deck the walls. On the right is a fire-place with logs burning low and in front of it, facing half round, is a carved high-backed bench. Sir Richard, followed by Eustace, enters through the curtains at the secret door on the left. Sir Richard wears doublet or coat of blue velvet with lavender trimmings, lavender hose, and a cape of deep orange. The youth, Eustace, is in satin coat of rose with slashed sleeves showing light green beneath, and hose of pale green. He carries a guitar.*]

EUSTACE. You will not tell me, then, what troubles you?

RICHARD. You're old, dear boy, beyond your years and yet,
Believe me, there are feelings that the soul

Is ripe for only with the ripening time.
It is a pretty and a kindly law
That life tests not the tender flesh of babes
In the same scales of rude experience
She uses 'gainst the muscles of strong men.

EUSTACE. But I, my lord, am not a babe.

RICHARD [*turning and regarding him with a smile*]. Not quite!

EUSTACE. Perhaps I've lived more in my meagre years
Than you suppose.

RICHARD. I would not underrate you,
But if a seed falls not in fallow soil
It will not grow, or sprouts up dwarfed and poor.
The soil of your young soul is not yet ripe
To nourish seeds that may take root in mine
And bear the fruit of rich experience.

EUSTACE. I can not follow up your figures fair
But yet conceding all you say is true,
That it would be impossible for me
To have the same experience as you
May I not feel your trouble? Or your ruth?
And help to bear it through my sympathy?

RICHARD. Real sympathy comes not from inexperience.

EUSTACE. With all your weight of years [*smiling*], there you mistake.
Real sympathy comes from a tender heart.

RICHARD. The Queen's heart's tender, but —

EUSTACE. The Queen's the Queen.

RICHARD. Ah, yes, I know! I know! And I will do
Her bidding loyally. Kind Heaven forfend
That I should learn allegiance from a page!

EUSTACE. Then is it true? The rumor spread last night,
And over which the court's so much amazed?
RICHARD. The court had better wisely hold its tongue.
The rumor that you speak of I've not heard.
— They dare to cackle when one's back is turned! —
But I do leave to-morrow with the dawn,
It is the Queen's will, therefore is it right.
I go to join a band of gentlemen
— And rogues — that sails to seek the colonies,
There to maintain a province for the Queen,
Which it is hoped will grow to something great,
Another kingdom overseas for her,
In that new land of wondrous fair report.
[*He walks over to the fireplace and stands gazing at the dying embers with his back to Eustace.*]
EUSTACE [*following him*].
Do you remain forever in that place?
RICHARD. What time I shall return is not yet named.
There will be talk concerning it and me [*turns round to Eustace*],
Other fair names perchance will be dragged in.
[*He strides up to Eustace and grasps him almost roughly by the shoulder.*]
Boy, gossip is a vile worm crawling thick,
Whenever you do find it, trample it!
EUSTACE. My lord, when I hear aught against your name,
Trust me, I will defend it properly.
[*They go out as Eustace speaks. Silvia steals*

in through the curtained entrance on the left. She has evidently heard voices and is listening. She crosses to the center of the room, stops and comes back, stands about as if thinking, finally glides to the bench in front of the fire and sits down looking at the embers, leaning over towards the fire with her hands clasped in front of her. She sits a few moments in utter silence, making a tableau, then Eustace returns through the center door.]

SILVIA [*looking up and smiling*].

Ah, Eustace, I was hoping you would come.

EUSTACE [*dropping his head and looking down*].

You draw me always to you when you will.

[*She regards him smiling then, after a pause, says:*]

SILVIA. I feel so strangely lone to-night and sad.

What night is it?

[*Eustace has had his guitar in his hand. He now leans it against the wall at the back of the room and comes over towards her.*]

EUSTACE. It is St. Agnes' Eve.

SILVIA. Ah, then, poor saint, her soul must walk abroad,
And that is why the wild winds wail so shrill,
And why the clouds go by like trailing shrouds,
And why the elm trees sway as in despair,
And why I feel foreboding and unrest.
On such a night I think of country roads
And deep beech woods with ghosts behind each tree,

And eerie hooting owls and far away
The fearsome howling of a dismal dog,
And on a lonesome bough a robin cold,
Despite his orange feathers, in the wind.
On such a night I'm fain to wander forth
And join them in their wild performances.

EUSTACE. You like a night like this?

SILVIA. No, but I feel
Its magic grip my heart.

EUSTACE [*he comes closer*]. It is because
You are a part of all the witchery
That sways the trees and beasts and hearts of men.

SILVIA. But hearts of boys come not within my sway.

EUSTACE. They are already yours, contented with
The honey-dew of pleasure from your smile.

SILVIA. Ah, Eustace, what a courtier you will make,
And what a wooer when you come to woo!
Already I grow envious of her,
And grudge the pretty sonnets and the songs
You'll make for her and sing on summer nights.
On summer nights!

[*She looks into the dying fire and shivers.*]
Ah, listen to the wind!

EUSTACE. Can one be jealous of one's own fair self?

SILVIA [*turning to him and smiling sweetly*].
Dear boy, you'll love again and yet again
A hundred times before you come to wed.
You are my friend and I can count on that,
For I do know and trust your true young heart.

EUSTACE. Of our two hearts mine's older by a day,
Though it lived not till yours began to beat.
SILVIA. You must not talk so, surely not to-night,
When phantoms ride upon the wind outside
And gossip slips and slides within the court.
They talk and talk and ever still they talk
And tell of this one now and now of that.
To-day I think they meddle with my name —
Tell me what you have heard.
EUSTACE [*trying to evade her and make light of it*]. I've not heard much.
SILVIA. But I would know that much — I'm curious.
EUSTACE. Therefore you should not be so gratified.
SILVIA. I'm also serious. Eustace, tell me, please.
'Tis best that gossip come, if come it must,
Upon a friendly not a spiteful tongue.
EUSTACE. They say the Queen has heard and thinks it true
Sir Richard loves you and that you return
His deep affection yet an hundredfold.
[*She scans his face in deep earnestness and amazement, then slowly turns her eyes away and gazes straight in front of her in deep honesty. She speaks low as if to herself.*]
SILVIA. He does not look at me, he scarcely knows
I live — then how could I —
EUSTACE. They say the Queen
Herself cares for my lord and will not let

Another have his love, so she has planned
To send him out of England, overseas.

[*Silvia has not heard this before and takes it in slowly, wonderingly, abstractedly. She looks at Eustace and finally down at her own hands lying quietly in her lap. Then she speaks low.*]

SILVIA. And I the small unconscious cause of this?

[*After another pause.*] Why does she not send me away from court?
No one would miss me — I would gladly go.
Jealous of me — she, the great Queen, of me?
To send him overseas for doing naught,
Who's needed here.— It is unjust, unjust! [*A long pause.*]

EUSTACE. Your going from the court would do no good,
My lord would follow you — if that he cared.

[*Another pause, Eustace watching her.*]

EUSTACE. 'Tis not your fault nor does it lie with you
To mend it. Worry not. The Queen's the Queen.

[*He is silently watching in the next pause until finally she looks up and speaks in a different tone.*]

You are so good to wear my little rose.

SILVIA [*brightening*]. 'Tis a good little rose and very fair,
The virtue's in the flower and not in me.
Sing me the song again you sang last night.

[*Eustace goes and gets his guitar, tunes it and sings the song:*]

EUSTACE [*singing*],

Ah, take the rose,
Its leaves unclose
A thousand tender thoughts of thee,
Thy beauty rare, thy gentle grace,
Thy fair simplicity.

Ah, take the rose,
For with it goes,
My love, my tender love of thee,
And may it find a little place
Within thy memory.

[*Sir Richard returns and parts the curtains at the center door. Silvia starts to her feet and stands waiting for his advance. He has stopped at seeing Silvia and Eustace together. Eustace, who has had his back to the door, turns and drops behind Silvia on the other side from the other man. Richard takes a stride or two forward, at first he looks from one to the other haughtily, then his gaze remains fixed on Silvia.*]

RICHARD. I fear I interrupt a pretty scene
Of love-making and soulful serenade.

[*Eustace exclaims and steps more into the background.*]

SILVIA [*becoming more dignified and with a shade of anger*].
Is it a sin, my lord, to sing a song?
I thought the music sweet and think so still
Despite the disapproval of my lord.
[*More lightly.*] Perhaps some weightier matter
brought the frown.

We'll deem the notes of music innocent
Until pronounced quite guilty by the court.
You are the judge, my lord, be merciful!
RICHARD. 'Tis true a weightier matter brought the frown.
I sought you everywhere and find you here —
[*As if breaking off the thread of his thought.*]
It is essential that I speak with you
Of something imminent and bearing great
Import to me. Eustace, by your leave.
[*For the first time since his entrance he shifts his gaze to Eustace and his look is one of command. He makes a gesture of dismissal. Eustace bows low and with dignity and grace goes out through the curtains at the center door. Silvia looks after Eustace, then silently and intently regards Richard, who drops his eyes to the floor and is agitated. Then he raises his head and they gaze at each other a few moments before he speaks.*]
RICHARD. You made it plain just now that what I like
Or disapprove has little weight with you.
SILVIA [*very gently*]. You have no right to draw an inference
So strangely strained and twisted from my words.
I only said I thought the music sweet.
RICHARD [*with heat*]. And meant you like the singer passing well.
SILVIA [*very low and gently*]. I do, my lord, but it is quite unjust
For you to misinterpret what I say.

RICHARD. Ah, can you flout me with a page's love?
I came upon him wooing you —
SILVIA. My lord,
You were unkind to Eustace and to me,
You were so sharp with him and as for me,
You have no right to question my intent.
We were small playmates back in childhood days,
And now our friendship's haply here renewed
After an interval of separate years.
RICHARD. I knew not your acquaintance was so old.
The love you bear each other is not new?
SILVIA. I almost think you wilfully mistake.
He brings to mind the little girl I was,
And country lanes and springtime's deep blue sky
And robins with their music wistful-gay
And apple-orchards pink with fairy bloom
And little lone cold brooks so zealous in
Their little busy, pushing, plashing way.
RICHARD. But he did sing a love-song to you now?
SILVIA. I did not sing it back again to him.
Lovers are many, ballads and sonnets grow
Like small green poplar leaves, a myriad.
RICHARD. And drop the soonest in the first strong wind.
'Tis not a night for tender leaves of spring.
SILVIA. Therefore the more should I not cherish them?
On such a night as this when the fierce wind
Drives in the cold from underneath the door,
Forcing a rigor up into the soul,

When hearts seem frozen like the dull hard ground,
And portents cry and clamor to be heard,
One longs for sympathy and memory
Of summer fields and days when life was glad
And warm with gentleness and simple faith.

[*She droops into the corner of the bench towards him. He comes closer and gazes at her searchingly.*]

RICHARD. Is life here at the court unkind to you?

SILVIA. Ah, no, the court has many ladies good
And gracious gentlemen,— only to-night
I feel a little child unfit to cope
With difficult problems life must bring to all.

[*His voice becomes very gentle as he says:*]

RICHARD. Have you encountered problems then so soon?

SILVIA. Questions of choice come early, do not they?
Questions of self-effacement follow soon.

[*He looks at her surprised. She waits a few moments, hoping he will speak. He does not and she goes on.*]

SILVIA. A problem still more difficult to solve
It is when one would very quickly choose
To cancel self but may not since the right
Lies with my masters, only, not with me.

[*He sits down by her on the bench but still does not speak.*]

SILVIA. You sought me out with something you would say?

RICHARD. It is so hard to say — hard to begin,

And having once begun, I fear I'll tell
Too much. My heart is very, very full.

SILVIA. Perhaps I know a little. [*Looking at him timidly.*]

RICHARD. Do you know
That I am sent away?

SILVIA. Yes, I have heard.

RICHARD. The Queen will give no reason — I will not
Credit the silly reason others give.
My plans are all o'erturned, my dearest hopes
Are fallen like an infant's house of blocks.
I'm torn asunder 'twixt my loyalty
And duty to myself and to my love.
Why should she send me, give no cause for it?

[*He rises and paces up and down for a few moments.*]

Ah, Silvia, I walk as in a dream!
It is so sudden, so unnatural.
Only to-night she told me, though I heard
The rumor flying through the court this morn.

SILVIA. 'Tis true, then, from the Queen's own lips, 'tis true?

RICHARD. She sent for me, I had an audience
A few hours since.

[*He walks across the room, she watching him silently. After a pause he continues.*]

She was not like herself.
She seemed secretive, furtive, strangely cold.
She questioned me on subjects various,
And foreign to our thought, but finally
She said the word, she said that I must go.

SILVIA. What reason did she give?

RICHARD. I told you, none.

SILVIA. But could you mildly yield to her unjust?

RICHARD. Not so, I mildly yield my rights to none.
How could you think I would? But you forget
She is the Queen. Ah, Heaven, she is the Queen!
I have said all I could — argued — prayed —
My fealty binds me — for the time I yield.
The expedition sails in early spring,
Until that time I'll be away from here.

[*He stands gazing at her with all his love in his eyes.*]

I may not ever see your face again.
I go to-morrow with the early dawn.

[*Silvia starts quickly and exclaims.*]

SILVIA. To-morrow with the dawn? Ah, not so soon!

RICHARD. I have come here to-night to say good-by,
To tell you that I love you.

SILVIA [*looking up at him entreatingly*]. Do not go!

RICHARD. You care a little, then?

SILVIA. All that I may.

[*She rises and stands leaning against the back of the bench. He starts toward her with an exclamation, then stops, puts the back of his hand over his eyes a moment, then passes it over on one side of his brow.*]

RICHARD. It is not right for me to take your love,
Not right for me to have your promises,
But only right for me to give you mine.

I go for her, but leave my heart with you,
Not with the Queen — my love is all for you,
My thoughts from far away will be with you,
My longing to return will be for you.
Dear Love, I will come back again to you,
My wish, my will, my life will be for that.
Ah, let me look at you one moment more
And let my sharpened wit now etch the sight.
Of you as you are now upon my brain:
My eyes are always seeing you — I know
Just how you stand, the silent gentleness
Each gesture has. My fancy adds you to
Scenes here or anywhere — the firm white wrist,
The clear and honest glory of your eyes.
This special vision will I keep to yield
Me solace at the end of weary day
When night has come and I may dream of you.

[*After a moment's pause and with a slight change of tone.*]

If you will give me something I may wear
Of yours —

SILVIA [*taking a step or two toward him impulsively*].

I would give you anything.

[*She takes off a cross and chain and is about to put it about his neck, but he stops her, taking it out of her hands and replacing it about her own.*]

RICHARD. No, not the cross, something quite valueless
Except for what it means to you and me,
Something more delicate that I may keep
Even if it fades — you'll let me take the rose?

[*She gives it to him, he bows over it, kneel-*

ing and kissing her hand. Then he rises, takes her in his arms for a moment, releases her and swiftly, without ever looking back, he goes out through the curtains at the back of the room. She is left desolate, standing looking after him. From the left and far away Eustace is heard singing. Silvia goes to the bench and drops into it, hiding away in the corner as far as possible, pale and chill, holding the cross to her lips as she gazes at the embers almost fallen to ashes. Eustace is heard singing.]

EUSTACE.

Ah, take the rose,
For with it goes
My love, my tender love of thee,
And may it find a little place
Within thy memory!

LUCK?

A FARCE COMEDY.

CHARACTERS AS THEY APPEAR.

NORAH, *a maid at the Vaughn's.*
EVELYN VAUGHN, *engaged to Roger Campbell.*
DR. ROGER CAMPBELL, *a young surgeon.*
MISS WRIGHT.
MRS. FULSOM.
MISS CARMICHAEL.
MISS BAILEY.
MRS. YOUNG.
MR. MELLICENT, *a young clergyman.*
DR. WILSON, *a professor of psychology.*
FIRST POLICEMAN.
SECOND POLICEMAN.
PETER, *the Campbell's man.*

SCENES.

ACT I. Library at the Vaughn's. The 29th of October, afternoon.
ACT II. Home of Mrs. Maxwell. The 30th of October, afternoon.
ACT III. Tea room of the Beechmont Country Club. The 31st of October, afternoon.
ACT IV. Library at the Vaughn's. The 31st of October, evening.

[*The library in the Vaughn home. The room is furnished in heavy mahogany and has low bookcases around the walls with a few fine prints hanging above them. There is a big table a little to one side of the center of the room, covered with books and magazines, and on it, too, a big electric lamp. A chair is at either side of the table. There are other chairs, a couch, a heavy teak-wood tabouret in a corner of the front part of the room. On a bookcase is a Japanese jar having on it the three wise monkeys of Japan. It is overturned and its contents of rose-petal pot-pourri scattered. A rosy-cheeked Irish maid enters through the curtains at the door on the left side of the room towards the back, and rushes diagonally across to the tabouret. She pants wildly and is carrying a huge jar of pink Killarney roses. She gets the jar safely on the tabouret, then slips on the polished floor and sprawls awkwardly at full length.*]

NORAH [*giving a shriek and slowly getting herself up*]. Ach! Holy Mother be thanked 'twas me an' not the roses! 'Tis the fairies be up to their old thricks, trippin' ye an' sich. At Hallowe'en they do be playin' mad pranks and givin' iverybody bad luck. [*She goes through the room straightening things, picks up newspapers that have been scattered over the floor, arranges the pillows on the couch, and so on. She goes to the bookcase and begins putting back the spilled rose leaves and as she does so a young*

lady carrying a little black kitten comes in through the curtains at the same entrance.]

EVELYN. What on earth were you doing, Norah?

NORAH. 'Twas the jar knocked over, miss. I surmise Timmy must have did it.

EVELYN. But that little jar turned over didn't make the awful crash I heard a moment ago.

NORAH. No, miss, the crash wasn't the jar, that was me — yet sure 'twas a jar, too. [*She looks rueful and rubs her hip.*] But I think Timmy must have did this.

EVELYN [*to the kitten*]. Did you do this, you little de'il? Maybe the fairies were up to pranks, Norah. It is nearly Hallowe'en, you know, and they seem to be more lively at this time of year than at any other. Do you believe in fairies, Norah?

NORAH. There is some as don't, miss, but as for me — [*shaking her head and crossing herself as one should say "I know too much, I am too wise not to believe"*].

EVELYN. So do I, Norah. I believe in fairies, though perhaps mine are not just exactly like yours. There are fairies of the mind as well as of the eyes, you know.

NORAH [*looking very mystified and rolling her eyes from one corner of the room to the other as if expecting to see something untoward*]. No, miss, I didn't.

EVELYN. Well, there are. And when you come to study experimental psychology and varieties of hypnotic experience and especially esoteric Buddhism, you'll realize it.

NORAH. Saints preserve us, miss! It seems to me as though the little old Irish fairies could do enough harm without addin' any such new-fangled ones to help thim in their little diviltries.

EVELYN. They aren't new — only stupid people are just beginning to find them out. [*To the kitten.*] Timmy, if you're going to be destructive, you'll have to go. Society doesn't harbor destructive little animals. Norah, didn't you say your aunt would be glad to have him? Well, you can take him home to her whenever you have time.

NORAH. If I was you, miss, I wouldn't give him away. 'Tis great good luck to have a black cat follow you the way he did, an' the people that owned him said you could have him, so he's a free gift as well, and it's bad luck to put away a gift.

EVELYN. I like him, bless his little heart! [*She strokes and pets him.*] But the family doesn't approve of him even in his state of innocence, and if he should break a vase or something goodness knows what would happen. No, he'll have to go. He'll have a good home with your aunt and be just as happy there as with me, and I think you'd better take him at once before I get any fonder of him. [*Holding the kitten up in her hands and dangling his little legs in front of her.*] If you become too attached to good luck, it makes you soft so you can't stand bad luck. I like people with lots of pluck who can bear bad luck.

NORAH. Oh, as for me, I wisht nobody would never have bad luck at all, at all, miss.

[*Evelyn goes out through the same door, carrying the kitten. Norah has stopped respectfully while her mistress talked to her; she now finishes putting the rose leaves back in the jar, takes the corner of her apron to dust it and places it back where it stood, and then she goes out the same door. She has not more than disappeared when the door-bell is heard to ring. Norah appears again at the same door and passes through the room to answer the bell. In a second a young man enters, followed by the maid. He looks very gay and happy, has his hat under his arm and is beginning to take off his gloves.*]

CAMPBELL. She's at home, is she, Norah?

NORAH [*archly*]. I would be thinkin' perhaps she knew you might be comin', sir.

CAMPBELL [*putting his hat on one end of the bookcase*]. No, she didn't, for I didn't telephone her.

NORAH. Maybe she knew, anyhow, sir.

CAMPBELL. No, she couldn't possibly. For I didn't know myself till two minutes before I started.

NORAH. Perhaps she surmised you was comin' before the idea entered your own head, yourself, sir.

CAMPBELL. Oh, fiddlesticks! [*He has been walking about in a sort of happy nervousness, pulling off the fingers of his gloves.*] That sounds like the nonsense so-called educated people talk nowadays. Whoever put such an idiotic notion into your pretty head? [*He stands in*

front of her, smiling and pulls a half-dollar out of his pocket, holding both hands behind him.] Which hand will you take? [*Then, extending them, the right hand holding the money and the left hand holding his gloves.*] But pshaw! Nobody could ever give you the mitten. [*He gives her the money, waving the gloves in the air to illustrate his joke.*]

NORAH [*with delightful coyness*]. Sure, you're as handsome a gintleman as you're gineroous. [*She has a rich Irish brogue.*]

CAMPBELL. Norah, such kisses as yours ought never to have been wasted on a stone, but evidently you *have* kissed the Blarney Stone. My thanks to it. Now, run and tell her I'm here.

[*Norah goes out through the curtains at the left back door. The young man puts his gloves together and places them on the tabouret under the roses while he leans down to smell them and smile. He has evidently sent them. He walks about with his hands behind him and then thrusts them into his pockets, whistling softly. He goes to the low bookcase and picks up the Japanese jar. Finally when he is on the opposite side of the room Evelyn enters through the same left door. She is dressed in blue, is flushed and joyous. He turns and strides forward and they meet considerably on her side of the center of the room. He catches her hands, swings them to and fro, beaming, then throws them around his shoulders, takes her in his arms and kisses her. He re-*

leases her, holding her from him and regarding her with delight.]

CAMPBELL. Isn't it a bully day? It's so fine I had to come. It's a funny thing that whenever the day is particularly fine I want to see you.

EVELYN. I thought you said whenever it was rainy you wanted to see me.

CAMPBELL. I do. It's a peculiar effect the weather has on me — whatever it is, it makes me want to see you! [*They both laugh.*]

EVELYN. You crazy boy, I knew you were coming. [*She sits down at the left side of the table.*]

CAMPBELL. Oh, that's not hard. You'd be pretty sure to guess right about that nine times out of ten, wouldn't you? [*He laughs.*] Don't draw telepathic inferences from the conduct of a man who is in love with you. [*He sits down on a corner of the table nearest her.*] How have you managed to put in the day without me?

EVELYN [*in playful satire*]. I've lived on the hope of seeing you.

CAMPBELL [*regarding her critically*]. You don't look as if you had pined enough.

EVELYN. I'm the kind that doesn't show trouble. And beside, the great happiness of your presence has driven away now all the traces of sorrow.

CAMPBELL [*growing serious*]. Evelyn, you talk as if you were making fun of our love.

EVELYN. Why, dea —

CAMPBELL [*quickly*]. Say it!

EVELYN. Roger!

CAMPBELL. No, the other!

EVELYN. Dearest! [*With a little gulp and smiling side-glance at him.*] You began it. [*He immediately slides over and sits on the arm of her chair.*] Oh, please don't! Some one may come in any minute.

CAMPBELL. I don't care if they do.

EVELYN. I do. You don't know how they tease me about you, anyway.

CAMPBELL. I like them to tease me. I like them to talk about you all the time.

EVELYN. Do get up!

CAMPBELL [*rising impatiently*]. Well, then, let's go for a walk. [*Looking at his watch.*] I haven't much time to spare. It will do you good after sitting here fretting for me all these live-long hours. [*He gives her a funny, quizzical look and grins.*] Honestly, Evelyn, it is a glorious day. You never saw such a blue sky — it's more bewitching than ever in spring. I came along under some golden and flaming trees and they seemed like autumn's votive offering to the spirit of fire. Lord, but they were glorious!

EVELYN [*smiling appreciation*]. I'd love to go, only I have a little thing I want to give you first.

CAMPBELL [*with delight and deep emotion*]. A present! Bless your heart!

[*She runs out of the room and is gone only a few moments. He stands about smiling. He is very evidently in the seventh heaven where dwell young men in the first days of their engagement. She returns and stands with her hands behind her. They both*

laugh, gaze at each other and are ecstatically happy.]

EVELYN. Something for you. Now, shut your eyes and see what the queen will send you. [*Campbell obeys. She takes his left hand and slips on the little finger a very large silver ring with a Swastika cross in light blue enamel on the top of it. He opens his eyes, holds up his hand and gazes abstractedly at the ring, then at her, in a thoroughly non-plussed way. She smiles at him but he does not smile back. He looks at the ring. Finally he speaks.*]

CAMPBELL. Evelyn, you don't really expect me to wear that? [*Holding up his hand and wriggling his little finger.*]

EVELYN. Why, surely, why else would I give it to you? [*Her smile has died away and she seems a little chilled.*]

CAMPBELL [*still holding up his hand in an awkward fashion and speaking with a tone and manner slightly patronizing*]. Any sort of ring on a man is bad enough, but a silver ring set with blue enamel is the inappropriate allowed to bawl from a housetop.

EVELYN [*disappointed, but trying for an understanding*]. Oh, I agree with you about rings in general but this is different.

CAMPBELL. It's worse.

EVELYN. It is unique and symbolical. It isn't like wearing a diamond ring. I wouldn't ask you to go about adorned like a drummer.

CAMPBELL. No, but I'd be moderately inconspicuous then, almost as if I wore a hat. People have grown tolerant of misapplied diamonds.

But the Swastika swarms like an invasion of Goths still untamed. You want me to join the horde of belt-buckles and hat-pins.

EVELYN. You contradict yourself.

CAMPBELL. I'm too amazed to be logical. I can't see how you would expect me to wear a thing like this. It's as prevalent as peanuts.

EVELYN. A thing that has intrinsic beauty is not hurt by popularity.

CAMPBELL. Oh, intrinsic beauty is all right. But you'll have to admit that this thing has the extraordinary combination of the qualities of oddity and popularity.

[*Evelyn does not answer but goes over to the couch and sits down with a sigh as if to wait patiently till his argumentative mood has passed. He marches up and down the room, looking at the ring every now and then, holding up for inspection and wriggling his little finger.*]

CAMPBELL. Why did you choose a thing so strange? Why is the extraordinary always an excuse to you for breaking conventions and sane principles? Why has the caviare so peculiar a fascination for a fastidious young woman like you?

EVELYN [*growing a little dignified and icy*]. I was not aware it had. Nobody ever told me before that I broke conventions and sane principles.

CAMPBELL. Nobody was ever so honest before with you. I can't understand how a girl of such good family, so well brought up, can be so unconventional and care so much for the queer.

I suppose you picked this up just because it was queer.

EVELYN. Perhaps my family have been too proper and that's why I'm not. But there's nothing queer in this.

CAMPBELL. There isn't, eh? Me wearing a blue enamel ring!

EVELYN. A man ought to be independent enough to wear anything. And, beside, I don't think it's very kind in you to think I would choose something for you because it was queer. It was the symbolism of it that attracted me.

CAMPBELL. There you go again! [*Stopping short and gesturing with irritation.*] Why can't you leave symbolism to priests and painters? It is extremely absurd and what is more and worse it's unsanitary.

EVELYN. You can wash this ring in carbolic acid every day, if you want to.

CAMPBELL [*very much exasperated*]. Why not just leave it in a bottle of alcohol and only pretend to be wearing it — that would be the superlative example of your symbolism.

EVELYN. Or of your cynicism.

CAMPBELL. But it is the principle of the thing. Why do you —

EVELYN. Roger, we have gone all over this several times before.

CAMPBELL. Yes, I know we have. But here it is all up in the air again. You are supposed to be intelligent, you *are* intelligent, and yet you behave sometimes as if you believed in the most flagrant and idiotic superstitions that even Norah would laugh at.

EVELYN [*unmoved*]. Would she?

ROGER [*hotly*]. Certainly. Well, then, why don't you deny it? Why don't you say something?

EVELYN. I wonder.

CAMPBELL. I don't understand it. I don't understand how you can combine the two qualities — how you can hate conventionalities as you do and yet worship all sorts of puerile and idiotic symbolism.

EVELYN. Perhaps nobody is consistent. *You* weren't a moment ago. [*She sits staring at the floor.*]

CAMPBELL [*standing still and looking at her*]. And even now you are not retreating from your position in the least.

EVELYN [*opening her eyes wide and looking at him calmly*]. Why should I?

CAMPBELL [*with a trifle of embarrassment*]. Well, one might expect you to try to see things as I do.

EVELYN. I think I do generally.

CAMPBELL [*hotly*]. I don't think you do at all. I don't think you try to.

EVELYN [*slowly*]. I am wondering. I am trying to think why once in a while you should take these unaccountable fits of obstinacy and belligerence — why you should become so difficult —

CAMPBELL [*quickly*]. To manage, I suppose. So you try to manage me, do you? Well, on the other hand, I try to excuse it in you, but really I can not understand why you do not endeavor to see things sensibly and to overcome

your taste for humbug. It is the *principle* of the thing. [*He sits down on the left side of the table.*]

EVELYN. That is exactly what I was thinking of. Of course the ring is nothing — it is of silver, of no value, but it is pretty, artistic, unique, and I was attracted to it for that. Then the Swastika cross on it means good luck. But it was something more — the silver and the blue enamel meant the blue sky and the grey clouds, the sky we have always looked to and that was a sign between us when we were separated from each other. So the ring was doubly symbolic with a peculiar meaning to you and me that nothing else could have.

CAMPBELL [*he has listened to her speech but then catches sight of the ring again, shakes his head, rises and speaks rapidly*]. Can't you see how ridiculous it is for me to wear a thing like this? Imagine me demonstrating anatomy to a class of medical students in the dissecting room. Can't you see the picture? I with my knife in one hand [*gesturing with his right hand*], and this piece of superstition and folly [*holding up the left hand with the ring on it*] on the other? Can't you see how ridiculous it is?

EVELYN. No, I do not see that it is ridiculous at all! To me it is merely beautiful.

CAMPBELL. It *is* ridiculous. It is absurd, silly, puerile. And it is all that in *you* that makes you want to do such things, and want to make me do them. Pshaw! You ought to know better, Evelyn. A girl of your sense! You ought to have outgrown such folly. You

are forgetting your position. You are forgetting that you are grown up and engaged to be married. You are forgetting my position. You are permitting yourself to be silly and childish and worse — you are actually *indulging* and *encouraging* yourself in it. [*He strides about, exasperated, angry, and hot. She sits still watching him from her seat without turning her head. At last she says very quietly.*]

EVELYN. Will you wear the ring?

CAMPBELL [*surprised into austere bluntness*]. No, certainly not.

EVELYN. Then — then you might as well give it back and all that goes with it.

CAMPBELL [*in a tone of surprise and alarm*]. Surely you don't mean that?

EVELYN. I think I do. You said it was a matter of principle.

CAMPBELL. It is. You are asking me not only to seem but to feel absurd for a silly whim of yours.

EVELYN [*rising*]. And you are refusing to do the first little thing you are asked to do for my sake.

CAMPBELL. You are asking too much.

EVELYN. You are refusing too much.

CAMPBELL. Am I to understand that you really mean what you are saying?

EVELYN. You have given me the impression that you meant what you were saying.

CAMPBELL. But this can't be final.

EVELYN. You are making it so.

CAMPBELL. No, by Jove, I'm not — you are.

EVELYN. You don't need to raise your voice

so. I think you said you would not wear the ring?

CAMPBELL. Of course.

EVELYN. Then there is no more need for further talk about it.

[*Campbell stands a moment in uncertainty, then pulls the ring off his finger with some difficulty.*]

CAMPBELL. Do you really mean it?

EVELYN. I do.

[*He goes to the bookcase and gets his hat, turns and faces her.*]

CAMPBELL [*with perturbation*]. Good-by.

EVELYN. Good-by.

[*Campbell walks out of the door at the right — he has forgotten his gloves. After he is off the stage she goes across to the roses and stands looking at them. Campbell returns, standing in the doorway at the right.*]

CAMPBELL. You will maybe think this over and if for any reason whatever you may want me —

EVELYN [*not turning round*]. I shall not want you.

CAMPBELL. Oh, very well, then. Good-by.

EVELYN. Good-by.

[*He stands looking at her a moment reluctantly and dubiously. Then he goes out at right. After she is sure he has gone, she goes to the table and picks up the ring. She holds it up, regarding it with a vast malevolence, pressing her lips close together. Finally she takes it to the Japanese jar and drops it in. After that she slowly goes to*

the tabouret where the roses stand, throws herself on the floor under the roses and in a huddled-up heap, a rose pulled down to her face, she cries in desolation. A noise of footsteps is heard at the left. Evelyn calls out in a tear-choked voice.]

EVELYN. Oh, Norah, I have changed my mind about Timmy. I am not going to give him away.

NORAH. Oh, but I just come back from takin' him home, miss. He's gone.

[*The curtain goes down with Evelyn bowed below the roses, weeping.*]

ACT II.

[SCENE: *A room in the home of Mrs. Marshall, who is giving a tea. It is a pretty room, with many jars of flowers about and the ladies in their reception gowns make the scene gay. There is a table with a punch-bowl, cups, and so on.*]

MISS WRIGHT [*coming in*]. Nell, I want you to meet my friend, Miss Carmichael — Mrs. Fulsom.

MRS. FULSOM [*fulsomely*]. Are you *the* Miss Carmichael of Chicago?

MISS CARMICHAEL. Well, I don't know whether I am or not. I am from Chicago.

MRS. FULSOM. Oh, then, you *are*. I hear you are perfectly divinely, absolutely unscrupulous in the clever things you say.

MISS CARMICHAEL. Chicago is a breezy place, but I hope I'm not such a wind-bag.

MRS. FULSOM. Oh, what is more exhilarating than a sharp tongue!

MISS CARMICHAEL. A sharp conscience, perhaps. But a conscience is a spiritual appendix nowadays.

MRS. FULSOM. I love clever talk.

MISS CARMICHAEL. One only talks when there is nothing doing. When people are really acting there is no room for conversation.

MRS. FULSOM. Then you will talk here. Things are awfully dull.

MISS CARMICHAEL. I rather fancy things are happening here. Then one doesn't talk much.

MISS BAILEY. Have you heard that Evelyn's engagement to Roger Campbell is broken?

MRS. FULSOM [*with great excitement*]. Yes! They were coming to my house last night for some bridge and after dinner she sent a note to say that she had a headache, and he had his office girl telephone that he was called away on a case. So of course, I *knew!* I had to ask some other people and naturally was compelled to explain the situation.

MISS CARMICHAEL. Situations that aren't self-explanatory are worse than situations that explain themselves.

MRS. FULSOM. Perhaps that is the way it leaked out. I would be so sorry to have it come through me, but I suppose it had to come through somebody. I must regard myself as the unwilling agent.

MISS WRIGHT. I wonder what was the mat-

ter? But they never seemed suited to each other, to me. They are both so hot-headed.

MRS. FULSOM. Evelyn doesn't seem so.

MISS WRIGHT. But she is. People who are alike oughtn't to marry.

MISS BAILEY. But if they are very different, what will their children be?

MRS. FULSOM. Oh, I wonder if *that* isn't what produces *dual personality?*

MISS CARMICHAEL. Oh, dear, omnipresent eugenics! Must it even invade an afternoon tea?

MISS WRIGHT. I wasn't thinking of that. But it takes a woman who is genial and jolly and serene to get on with a man who is quick-tempered.

MISS BAILEY. One like you, my dear?

MRS. FULSOM [*after an uncomfortable moment*]. I believe the scientists have decided that the little god Love is no proper eugenist.

MISS CARMICHAEL. He is the greatest!

MISS BAILEY. I heard Roger had dreadful luck in his golf match to-day. He played his semi-finals at noon on account of some patient or other, and he was almost beaten.

MISS WRIGHT. Why, he has been in dandy form and has been playing a ripping game.

MISS BAILEY. I heard he lost three of his patients last night. Maybe that unnerved him.

MRS. FULSOM. I should think it might. What a crush Sallie Marshall always manages to get at her teas!

[*Enter Mrs. Young, an almost elderly lady*

with grey curls, and a thin, pale young rector in her tow.]

MRS. YOUNG. What a delightful oasis —

MISS WRIGHT. In the desert of Sarah!

MRS. YOUNG [*tapping Miss Wright on the cheek with her fan*]. Oh, you naughty punstress — or would you say punstrette? [*She smiles around the group with a graceful pride in her own humility. Dr. Wilson enters from the right.*]

DR. WILSON. Good afternoon, ladies. I saw Mrs. Young headed for somewhere that I knew would be delightful, a cosy nook, a shady dell, an overflowing spring of frappé, perhaps something cool and delicious with nymphs and goddesses, so I followed. I am rewarded for my intelligence.

MISS WRIGHT. You are not warm to-day?

DR. WILSON. There is such a throng in the drawing-room. Sometimes I almost think that people hurry in haste to repine in pleasure.

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, you witty man!

MISS WRIGHT. I was glad enough to get into the house. Coming over in the automobile it was so cold I couldn't talk to Betsy [*taking Miss Carmichael's arm*]. Whenever I opened my mouth the wind blew holes through my teeth.

MISS CARMICHAEL. I was resigned. I'd rather have gaps in the conversation than in your teeth.

[*Evelyn enters from the right. They greet her.*]

MRS. YOUNG. Mr. Mellicent and I [*indicating the pale young clergyman, who bows profoundly*] have been discussing dreams and I want to refer the matter to you, doctor. Do you believe in dreams?

DR. WILSON [*beaming with a quizzical look*]. Why — er — yes, I think they are delightful.

MRS. YOUNG. Yes, I know, one enjoys a pleasant dream, but do you consider them significant?

DR. WILSON. Oh, very. Of lobster a là Newburgh or salads or paté de foi gras or even an innocent Puritan New England pie.

MRS. YOUNG. Still, you do not wholly apprehend me. I mean are they significant psychically? Or would you say psychologically? [*She smiles around at them with her air of humility asking for assistance.*] I dream a great deal and I find my dreams so fascinating. I make it a rule to tell them always at the breakfast table, particularly if I have guests. I think it promotes conversation at that period of the day when persons do not usually feel stimulated to it.

DR. WILSON [*profoundly*]. Dreams have always been and still are the subject of deep interest to all those who are investigating psychic phenomena.

MRS. YOUNG [*enthusiastically*]. Oh, how clever of you to say so! I knew you couldn't disbelieve in premonitions.

DR. WILSON [*surprised*]. I don't know that I meant that altogether — that I — meant to go so far. And the term premonition is not so

much used nowadays. Intuition is the latest thing.

MISS WRIGHT. Well, people can call it premonition or whatever they choose, but I believe in it.

EVELYN. You have great hardihood to say so.

DR. WILSON. Oh, my dear young lady, not to-day. Twenty years ago, perhaps, physical science called everything that wasn't a germ superstition, but in the reaction now everybody talks psychic phenomena — except perhaps the few who really have experiences that are significant. [*He looks at her pointedly.*]

EVELYN. No one ought to hold back anything that might prove valuable to humanity. It is quite proper for the individual to allow his feelings to be vivisected for the sake of the race. Let's begin. Now why do you believe in premonitions? [*To Miss Wright.*]

MRS. FULSOM [*who has been devoting herself to Miss Carmichael*]. I want your friend to meet a friend of mine [*to Miss Wright*], may I borrow her a few minutes? I'll bring her back safely.

MISS WRIGHT [*smiling and nodding to Mrs. Fulsom*]. Why, Evelyn, the way I *feel* about things. Now, I am perfectly sure that Roger Campbell is going to be beaten at golf in the finals to-morrow. [*She relapses into a flushing state of embarrassment, conscious that she has put her foot into it, and the entire group is awkwardly silent except Mrs. Young, who does not*

realize the situation and looks about smiling at the others.]

MRS. YOUNG. Thought-transference is another very interesting phenomena — or would you say phenome*non*? [*She again looks about with the same smiling graceful pride in her own humility.*]

MISS BAILEY. Oh, that is a subject that I am immensely interested in. How far, doctor, do you think one mind can influence another?

DR. WILSON. Do you mean hypnotically, by suggestion?

MISS BAILEY. Well, no, I mean unconsciously or subconsciously, I suppose you would call it.

DR. WILSON. Perhaps I wouldn't call it that, but could you illustrate?

MISS BAILEY. Suppose one person is very much in the thoughts of another person and suppose he has a belief in something — a sort of superstition, which he hardly acknowledges or is even aware of, himself. Do you think that belief would have a compelling influence over the other person?

DR. WILSON. For example, if a girl believes an electric ring of iron will cure her sweetheart's rheumatism and slips it on his finger, will the rheumatism be very violent when he angrily discards it?

MISS BAILEY [*laughing*]. It is a little extreme, but we'll suppose it.

DR. WILSON [*looking to right and left and then in a very loud whisper with a great show of secrecy*]. Don't ever tell my students, but — I *don't know!* Warts have been wished off and

fortunes have been won by seeing the moon over the right shoulder, and people have given other people good luck with a five-leaf clover. To be serious, however, I have to tell you that though we could talk scientifically about it for weeks and use big words long as the stock-broker's tape, I don't know how much influence one mind has over another. [*Looking at Evelyn again.*] People who really have experiences are so secretive about them, it's hard to get data.

MISS BAILEY. I quite sympathize with them. Suppose you had a hope or a fear hardly acknowledged to yourself even and there seemed to be evidence of its affecting some one you loved — would you want to discuss it? Whether you believed in such a force or not, the proofs to make it seem possible would be inviolable.

EVELYN. What big words, Josephine!

DR. WILSON. Would you call it obsession?

MISS BAILEY. Oh, I would call it something more sacred. The feeling of such a person over another person would be something between a religious ecstasy and a self-conviction of sin. [*Profoundly and earnestly.*]

MISS WRIGHT. Well, I don't think people have any business to poke into other minds and influence them. It's as bad as stealing silver spoons.

MISS BAILEY. Suppose they don't know it, or that it is a force they can't control even if they do know.

EVELYN. All this is very entertaining but so —

DR. WILSON [*interrupting quickly*]. Personal?

EVELYN [*sweetly*]. No, I was going to say so caviare to the general. Such queer talk for a tea — caviare — why don't you stick to ices? [*She turns as if to go.*]

DR. WILSON. Too vague, you think? [*Detaining her.*] Come out to the University where we are trying to do some practical work. Dr. Roger Campbell was to have given a lecture on psychology of the brain this afternoon — that's material enough, isn't it?

EVELYN [*nonchalantly*]. And didn't he?

DR. WILSON. He was unable to carry out his purpose.

EVELYN. That seems unlike him.

MISS WRIGHT. Was he stage-struck? Lose his head?

DR. WILSON. Not exactly his head — he lost his brain.

MRS. YOUNG. I can't believe it!

DR. WILSON. It seemed an easy matter for him to get a brain because he is pathologist at the city hospital, you know — or did you know? [*Inquiringly of Evelyn.*]

EVELYN. I think I have heard so.

DR. WILSON. So he had access to unusual things. But the husband of the sometime owner of this particular brain turned up unexpectedly and made allegations about his late wife's lacking certain organs which he seemed to think necessary to her full equipment for the next world and further stated that the autopsy was held without the permission of the bereaved family.

Not to put too fine a point on it, he demanded the recalcitrant brain and had the doctor arrested.

MRS. YOUNG. Arrested, oh, how horrible! Oh, dear me, he is not still languishing in prison?

DR. WILSON. Oh, no, a doctor hasn't time for that.

EVELYN. A doctor never has time for anything he doesn't like.

DR. WILSON. A doctor can always furnish an alibi. The imaginary patient is the doctor's unfailing alibi.

[*Mrs. Fulsom and Miss Carmichael come in in a wild state of excitement.*]

MRS. FULSOM. What under the sun do you think? [*They are all intensely interested.*] An unheard-of thing is happening! [*They become somewhat excited.*] A most outrageous thing! [*Their excitement grows.*]

MISS BAILEY. Oh, tell us — don't keep us in suspense.

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, please!

MRS. FULSOM. There are two policemen outside!

MISS WRIGHT. Policemen?

MRS. FULSOM. Yes, two large, capable, robust, red-faced, blue policemen — determined to force an entrance.

MISS BAILEY. They must be detailed here to guard the tea.

MISS WRIGHT. Nonsense!

MISS BAILEY. Why, it would be perfectly possible — nowadays with so many cases of kleptomania in society.

MRS. FULSOM. But it isn't that at all. Their business is more — more sanguinary.

MISS WRIGHT. For heaven's sake, what do they want? Are they drunk?

MRS. FULSOM. No, they are deadly sober.

MISS WRIGHT. What on earth do they want?

MRS. FULSOM. That is the extraordinary and dreadful part of it. They want Roger Campbell! They have a warrant for his arrest and they have tracked him here. They won't be dissuaded from it. They say they are sorry to disconcert a tea but that the law is the law. They are very nice about it. They say they are willing to come in anywhere, through the roof and attic by means of a ladder, or through a cellar window, or the back kitchen door. They are not intent upon the front door and the drawing-room. But even with their manners it is so dreadful.

MRS. YOUNG. Even a refined arrest is so — so — malevolent! [*Looking round with her usual propitiatory air.*]

MRS. FULSOM. They say he'd much better be told so he can sneak out the back door with them quietly, but, of course, no one wants to tell him.

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, Mr. Mellicent, couldn't you break the news to him — you could do it so gently.

MR. MELLICENT [*for the first time opening his lips*]. I — I —

MRS. YOUNG. Or, better still, go and persuade those policemen to go away? You can be so persuasive!

MR. MELLICENT. I — I — I should be most happy.

EVELYN [*turning to go toward the door*]. How singular — at a tea! [*She is about to go out, looking backward at them, when she runs smack into Roger Campbell coming in at the left.*]

CAMPBELL. Oh, I beg your pardon.

EVELYN. It was all my fault. [*With meaning.*] People deserve to be knocked down if they don't look where they are going.

CAMPBELL. I was clumsy.

EVELYN. I wasn't looking — I was unavoidable.

CAMPBELL. You are, quite, but it was my place to attempt to avoid you.

[*She disappears through the door at the left and he comes into the room. The people all look at him as if he were a ghost. He smiles rather constrainedly and bows.*]

CAMPBELL. How do you do?

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, Dr. Campbell, we were just talking about you — about — what were we talking about? Coincidences, wasn't it? Or would you say coincidence? [*She flutes, smiling as usual*].

CAMPBELL. I hope I haven't interrupted.

[*Two policemen enter from the right, preceded by a little noise of voices and bustling on that side.*]

FIRST POLICEMAN. He's here, you know, all right, and he's got to go. [*He stops and looks around at the group.*] Which is him? *That?* [*He points at Mr. Mellicent. Clutching his club*

he makes a stride toward that gentleman in a bullying manner.]

MR. MELLICENT. Oh, dear, no! [*Frightened and dropping back to the protection of the ladies.*]

POLICEMAN. I thought not. You wouldn't kidnap a fly, would you?

MR. MELLICENT. I really should not enjoy interfering with the sacred liberty of anything, even a tiny winged creature.

MRS. YOUNG. How eloquent even in such adverse circumstances!

POLICEMAN. Well, friends, we're wastin' time.

CAMPBELL [*stepping forward*]. What is it you want?

POLICEMAN. A feller by the name of Dr. Campbell.

CAMPBELL. I am he, what do you want?

POLICEMAN. Well, then, come along.

CAMPBELL. What for?

POLICEMAN [*insinuatingly*]. Well, I reckon you know.

CAMPBELL. I don't.

POLICEMAN. Well maybe it'll come to you.

CAMPBELL. Explain yourself.

POLICEMAN. Well, if it ain't came to you yet, maybe you'll find out soon enough.

CAMPBELL. If you have any business with us, out with it.

POLICEMAN. We ain't got any business with *us*, but with you.

CAMPBELL. What is it?

POLICEMAN. Well, we don't want to give you away before your friends.

DR. WILSON. Come, come, my men, don't make a scene here. Go away and the doctor will follow you.

POLICEMAN. Well, not much he won't follow us, he'll go *mit.* That's what he'll do. [*Threateningly.*] An' we don't want none of *your* buttin' in, neither. The law's the law and you'd better not interfere. We've had about 'nough trouble over this case and we're gettin' peevish.

CAMPBELL. Get at it! Tell what you're driving at!

POLICEMAN. Well, if you must know, we're going to arrest you for kidnapin' that child.

CAMPBELL. For the Lord's sake, *what* child?

POLICEMAN. Well, it ain't goin' to do you no good neither to look innocent nor to get mad.

CAMPBELL. I have kidnaped no child and I refuse to be arrested.

POLICEMAN. They're right all right; they got the number of your car. And so her folks is dead sure it was you. You'll have to produce the child.

CAMPBELL. Will somebody kindly lend me a child? I'm nothing but an unworthy bachelor, you know.

POLICEMAN. Well, we're wastin' time. An', as I made mention of before, we're gettin' wore out. You kidnaped the infant, come along.

CAMPBELL. I did not kidnap an infant. I'm no such fool. If I were going to kidnap anything it would be a grown woman. I wouldn't stop at a baby.

POLICEMAN. Now stop your kiddin' or I'll have to use force.

CAMPBELL [*growing very angry at last*]. Will you, though! [*He clenches his fists.*] Touch me if you dare! [*The two face each other and a row seems imminent.*]

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, dear, oh dear! Mr. Mellicent, do part them!

DR. WILSON. Hold on, Campbell! Remember the ladies. There's a good fellow!

CAMPBELL. Then you'd better shoo the ladies out of here.

POLICEMAN. Sure, Mike, this ain't no place for ladies.

CAMPBELL. What about you? What business have you to enter a house this way? It strikes me it's your place to get out.

POLICEMAN. I'm goin'— but not alone. I love company.

[*The policeman starts for Campbell, who is quick and muscular, hauls off with his fist and hits the policeman in the face. The ladies shriek. Both policemen make for Campbell.*]

DR. WILSON. Hold on, Campbell, don't fight! You'll have to go with them.

[*There is a great tussle and confusion. The policemen grab him, he slips from them, they catch him again and hold him tight, one of them swears.*]

POLICEMAN. We'll put handcuffs on you, if necessary. [*Produces them.*]

MRS. YOUNG. Handcuffs! Oh, Mr. Mellicent! [*Clinging to that worthy's arm.*]

DR. WILSON. Out this way — go out this way, men — down through the kitchen and the back door.

[*The policemen drag Campbell to the door at the left where Evelyn is just entering. She hurries by them and across the room to the other ladies. There is great confusion, exclamation and excitement, and the curtain goes down as the policemen drag Campbell out, followed by Dr. Wilson, leaving the frightened ladies. The affray takes up two or three minutes.*]

ACT III.

[*Tea-room of the Beechmont Country Club on the next afternoon, October 31st. The finals of the fall golf tournament are being played. The room is filled with rocking and straight backed chairs and settees of wicker and some mission furniture. Some old prints and modern posters are on the walls. There is a large table on which the silver cups and trophies are displayed. At the right is a desk extension telephone on a table. On the other side of the room rather in front is a low tea-table where Miss Bailey, Miss Wright, and Miss Carmichael are drinking tea.*]

MISS CARMICHAEL. Marriage is just an invention of society for the suppression of genius.

MISS BAILEY. Oh, what deplorable cynicism!

MISS CARMICHAEL. No, only observation.

I have seen so many girls who seemed to have brains, marry and have their brains swallowed up by their husbands. Marriage is a thought destroyer. Husbands gorge themselves on their wives' intellects till the poor things have scarcely enough left to make pickles.

MISS WRIGHT. You talk as if pickles were made with brains instead of vinegar.

MISS CARMICHAEL. It's about half and half. No cooking is savory without intellect in the preparation. That's why the French are so successful. They are the cleverest people in the world. Their brains are spicy.

MISS WRIGHT. All the same, being a woman, I believe in marriage. Maybe that's because I'm not a genius but only a humdrum sort that likes to ride in a man's automobile and to be taken to the theater. If I were a man I might believe in George Meredith's marriage for ten years system, but being a woman I want mine tied to me as tight as possible — I don't want anything left so he can escape.

MISS BAILEY [*seriously — Miss Bailey is always serious*]. Do you think there are very many unhappy marriages?

MISS WRIGHT. How on earth is any one to know? After they're married people won't tell any more than after they're dead. One thing is sure, if a married man will flirt with you, you can draw your own conclusions.

MISS CARMICHAEL. Not a bit of it. All men are natural polygamists and if a married man will flirt with you it doesn't prove that he is unhappy, but only that he's versatile. It

doesn't prove that he's heretical, but only that he's haremical.

MISS BAILEY [*laughing*]. You *are* cynical!

MISS CARMICHAEL. No, only sensible.

[*Mrs. Fulsom and Dr. Wilson enter from the right side chatting gaily.*]

MRS. FULSOM. Well, what are you girls doing that you are having such a good time?

MISS CARMICHAEL. Doing what two or three met together always do — eating.

DR. WILSON. And what are you talking about that you all are so interested in?

MISS CARMICHAEL. The subject unmarried women left alone together for three minutes always discuss — matrimony.

[*Mrs. Fulsom and Dr. Wilson laugh.*]

DR. WILSON. Married women, I suppose, don't talk about it — they bear it in silence.

MISS BAILEY. Well, you know, one is really privileged to have opinions if one has grown into a grey-haired spinster. [*She is rather an old young lady with grey hair.*]

DR. WILSON [*smiling*]. My dear girl, grey hairs do not a spinster make, nor added years old age. [*He bows to her with great deference.*]

MISS WRIGHT. I think spinsters are born, not made.

DR. WILSON. Yes, and it isn't a question of marriage. I know many married old maids. It has always seemed to me that women are divided into two classes, the eternal Sappho and the eternal mother. The spinster is a sort of third estate, like the clergy. And, for that matter, spinsterhood is not a question even of sex.

There are male spinsters. The division can not be made by nature through the arbitrary distinction of sex, nor yet by man through the arbitrary laws of marriage.

MISS CARMICHAEL. Oh, I have known old men spinsters — they are the worst of all.

[*Evelyn comes in in a hurry, evidently nervous.*]

MISS WRIGHT. Hello, Evelyn, you give one the impression of having been sent for.

EVELYN [*pulling off her gloves in haste*]. How do you do, Mrs. Fulsom? Good afternoon, Dr. Wilson. [*She is very nervous. Begins to take off her hat, pulling out the pins, then, as if recollecting herself, thrusts them in again.*]

MISS WRIGHT [*watching Evelyn closely*]. You still give me the idea of some one with an inward agitation. Did you forget to take your digestive tablet this morning?

EVELYN [*pulling herself together and smiling calmly*]. Don't judge others by what the doctor prescribes for you, dear. I never need digestive tablets.

MISS BAILEY. Who is hostess for this afternoon?

EVELYN. I am. I was on the committee but I didn't intend to come, for I have a headache —

MISS WRIGHT. You seem to have a good many headaches lately.

EVELYN. Mrs. Gray is hostess, but at the last minute she telephoned me she couldn't be here and to take her place. I am afraid I am late.

MISS BAILEY. Oh, no, you aren't. People

never begin to come till late in the afternoon when the games are nearly over.

Miss Wright [*with a meaning look at Evelyn*]. I don't know what could have made me think of him — but has anybody heard anything about Roger Campbell?

Miss Bailey. He is playing his finals this afternoon, so he must have managed to break his prison bars.

Dr. Wilson. I'll tell you about him. It was his car, sure enough, that had the baby, but the kidnaper was his chauffeur and not the doctor. The man was a friend of the little girl's aunt, somebody's cook, and he picked up the baby and took her for a ride. He brought her in all safe and sound with cracker-jack and chewing-gum and an ice-cream cone and the alarmed family was pacified. But Campbell was arrested again in the evening for running into an old man. The old fool literally walked in front of Campbell's car and couldn't be avoided. He wasn't much hurt, fortunately.

Miss Wright. I thought I was going to be arrested this afternoon. We had the glass front up in the car so we didn't feel the wind so much and we came whooping along and nearly demolished a fat policeman who was crossing the street. He almost had to run and you know a policeman can't any more run than a tight oil can can. That is, you can what you can, and so on! Imagine the catastrophe. We missed him by an inch. Well, Roger isn't so slow. To be arrested three times in the course of twenty-four hours is going some.

EVELYN. You'd better look out. People who ride in automobiles with glass fronts oughtn't to throw stones.

MRS. FULSOM. I hear the doctor is having all sorts of bad luck in his game this afternoon.

[*Evelyn goes out.*]

DR. WILSON. He is. He has a miserable caddy and the little fool has allowed two balls to hit his shins and lose two holes for Campbell. I'd never get in the way of a golf ball, myself. But caddies rush in where angels fear to tread.

MRS. FULSOM. Poor little fellow! I am sure I should not want a golf ball to hit my — ankles. They must hurt awfully.

DR. WILSON. They do. It's a great pity it hadn't hit him on the head and killed him.

MRS. FULSOM [*delightedly*]. Oh, you bloodthirsty person!

MISS WRIGHT. Well, everybody has picked Roge for the winner but I know he won't be. He's a dandy player but he hasn't got an open and shut cinch, for there's such a thing as luck and he's having awful luck lately.

[*The telephone rings. Miss Wright, who is standing near, answers it.*]

MISS WRIGHT. Hello! Yes, this is the Country Club. Dr. Campbell? No, I can't call Dr. Campbell to the telephone. No, I can't possibly, the Green Committee would skin me. I say the Green Committee would skin me, yes, *skin me.* He must not be inter-rupted, I tell you — he's playing in the finals. You are his grandfather's man? That doesn't impress me much.

I wouldn't call him if you were his grandfather's grandmother. Well, then, be frank. The old gentleman is in a cage? Oh, in a rage! Heard that his grandson had been speculating? Seems rather likely. Heard that his grandson had been arrested again? Well, what of that? Arrests occur of the best regulated automobiles. If I were you I'd just try to pacify the old gentleman. He's ramping around? Up and down, is he? You'd better keep him shut up in one room and not let any of his devoted friends call on him, for he might hear still worse things — things that would throw him straight into a fit. Devoted friends are bad enough any time but they're particularly so when you're in a cage — I mean in a rage. Well, I can't help it if he does have the gout — he can't have his grandson. I should think the gout would be enough. If it hurts him to stamp about, why on earth doesn't he sit down? If I were you I'd give the old gentleman a nice soft kitten to nurse and see if that won't amuse him. If he comes to the telephone and swears, I'll have him arrested! Merciful heavens! He is going to disinherit his grandson!

[*Campbell enters, from the right, in his golf clothes. He wears a pair of white duck trousers somewhat soiled where he has wiped his hands after the manner of golfing gentlemen and he has on a white silk shirt with turnover collar and flowing tie. His sleeves are rolled up and he limps. Miss Wright looks at him over her shoulder.*]

Miss Wright. I can't talk over personal

matters with you in a public place. [*She hangs up the receiver with a bang.*]

DR. WILSON. Hello, old man, how's the game?

CAMPBELL. Rotten. I came in for some tea.

DR. WILSON. Nothing stronger?

CAMPBELL. Not while I'm playing, thank you. Henderson wanted something, so we stopped for a few minutes. My, but that tea smells good. I'm terribly thirsty.

[*Evelyn enters with a plate of cakes in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. They are clearly embarrassed, standing still and confronting each other for the moment.*]

MRS. FULSOM. The doctor wants some tea, Evelyn.

EVELYN. Oh, won't you have this? [*She hands him the cup, which he is about to take.*]

MISS WRIGHT. How awfully fortunate that you happened to have just what he wanted! [*In passing the cup from one hand to the other they drop it. It smashes to the floor and the contents splash. They exclaim and in picking up the pieces they bump into each other. Dr. Wilson, then, also stoops to help. Roger limps to the table with the pieces.*]

MRS. FULSOM. Aren't you a little lame?

CAMPBELL. Yes, I turned my ankle down in the ravine where I lost a ball. I stepped on a stone and hurt the ball of my foot.

DR. WILSON. Did you find the ball?

CAMPBELL [*smiling*]. Well, the ball is here all right, as I have reason to know.

DR. WILSON. But the *ball?*

CAMPBELL. No, I lost the ball.

DR. WILSON. Then you lost the hole?

CAMPBELL. Yes, I have lost two holes, no, three, this afternoon by losing balls.

EVELYN. Won't you have a cake?

CAMPBELL. Thank you, not a cake.

MISS WRIGHT. I should think you'd want something sweet.

CAMPBELL [*with a glance at Evelyn*]. I do, but it doesn't seem to agree with me.

MISS WRIGHT. If I had as much bad luck as you, I'd take anything pleasant that came my way.

CAMPBELL. I don't believe in luck, you know.

MISS WRIGHT. I don't blame you. I don't see how you could any more.

CAMPBELL. I mean bad luck. I'm not superstitious.

MISS WRIGHT. No? Well, I had a cousin once who wasn't superstitious and once he was walking under a ladder and a brick fell on his head. It takes more than a brick to make some people tumble, however.

MRS. FULSOM. I hear you're winning.

CAMPBELL. "Report greatly exaggerated," as Mark Twain said when he was reported dead. I'm not beaten — yet. Which reminds me that Henderson may be waiting.

MISS WRIGHT. Good luck to you!

[*He turns and gives her a cross look over his shoulder, yet half-laughing, as he goes out.*]

DR. WILSON. I am a little worried about him.

Some men might get discouraged under such circumstances, such a streak of adversity, and it would affect their game.

MISS WRIGHT. You mean bad luck, by your streak of adversity? But I think he's looking pretty hardy yet, don't you, Evelyn?

EVELYN. I really didn't notice.

MISS WRIGHT. I observed you didn't look at him much.

EVELYN. Quite as much as usual. It's not my game to watch people in order to make remarks at their expense afterwards.

MISS WRIGHT. If my æsthetic nature would permit me to be vulgar, I should say, " Dear me, wouldn't that freeze you? " [*With a glance and gesture at Evelyn. Mrs. Young and Mr. Mellicent enter from the right.*]

MRS. YOUNG. Isn't it a charming day? Mr. Mellicent and I have been discussing the parting of autumn all the way over. He is going to make some beautiful allusions to it and quotations about it in his sermon Sunday.

MISS WRIGHT. He might quote from Tam o' Shanter — that seems appropriate as to season and morality.

DR. WILSON. Won't you come out with me, Mellicent, and watch the game? I think they are coming in.

MR. MELLICENT. I should be charmed.

DR. WILSON. Would you like to see it, Miss Carmichael? Or is gossip more sport than sport?

MISS CARMICHAEL. Indeed, I should love to come. You can't always watch a good game

of golf, but gossip, like the poor, you have always with you.

DR. WILSON [*as they go out*]. Golf first, gossip afterwards, like a cordial.

[*Mr. Mellicent bows low to the ladies and the three go out, Miss Wright preceding the two men and Mellicent with lowered head in his habitual manner of deference.*]

MISS WRIGHT. I want to tell you about Roge. It was his grandfather's man telephoning just now and he wants his grandson right away — I mean the old gentleman does. He's in a perfect cage — I mean a rage — and he says he's going to disinherit his grandson. He's heard about all the arrests and the patients dying — as if Roge could help that, if they will die — and the speculating and everything. I don't believe he'd mind anything but the money. He's such a stingy old codger. Oh, dear, I never saw such a streak of bad luck. It's awful. Roge told Dr. Wilson that some stocks broke awfully yesterday and worse this morning and he'd probably have to sell his automobile and maybe his office furniture.

MRS. YOUNG. He was perhaps merely joking — he's such a witty, amusing young man.

MISS WRIGHT. I never heard of a man joking at his own funeral.

MRS. FULSOM. It is so hard for a man to arrange about money. He never has any jewelry to sell.

MISS WRIGHT. No, I suppose overcoats and hats are good to wear out, but don't bring in much.

[*Miss Carmichael comes rushing in in a great state of excitement.*]

MISS WRIGHT. Why, Betsy, what's the matter with you? Was there a lion in your path?

MISS CARMICHAEL [*breathless*]. Oh, it's dreadful!

MISS WRIGHT. You look it — but what is?

MISS CARMICHAEL. It's horrible!

MISS WRIGHT. But what?

MISS CARMICHAEL. It is too much!

MISS WRIGHT. I never knew you to be inarticulate before — make signs.

MISS CARMICHAEL. Dr. Campbell was beaten in his golf match.

MISS WRIGHT. Confound the luck!

MISS CARMICHAEL. But that wasn't all.

ALL OF THEM. Well?

MISS CARMICHAEL. He was hit on the head by a golf ball and knocked senseless and they are bringing him in here now.

[*They all exclaim and are properly affected by the awful intelligence.*]

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, where is Mr. Mellicent? He will be able to do something. He is always so efficient.

[*There is a noise of footsteps. The ladies bustle about. Campbell is assisted in from the right by Dr. Wilson and Mr. Mellicent, who have their arms about him supporting him. His ankle is really sprained and he leans on them. They are both very solicitous, Mr. Mellicent actually so, Dr. Wilson acting. Mr. Mellicent futile as usual.*]

DR. WILSON. Get him a chair, please.

[*The ladies skurry about, pulling the tables and chairs out of the way and place an arm chair in the center of the room. The men help him to it and he sits down.*]

DR. WILSON. Do you feel better now, old chap?

CAMPBELL. No, I think I feel worse.

MRS. FULSOM. Oh, some one get him a glass of brandy!

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, has any one a camphor bottle? Or eau de cologne? Or would he prefer smelling-salts? Would you prefer smelling-salts, doctor?

[*The women all crowd about him.*]

MRS. FULSOM. Surely he ought to have some brandy.

DR. WILSON. No, no, I think not. Not brandy. But if you will not stand so close about him. Let him have a little air. And if some one would kindly bring a glass of water. [*Miss Wright, Miss Bailey, Mrs. Fulsom, and Miss Carmichael all rush out to get some water.*] And perhaps some ice on his head would be a good thing. [*Evelyn, who has been hiding in the background, hurries off for the ice.*]

CAMPBELL. I'm all right.

DR. WILSON [*in a loud whisper to Roger while the women are out*]. For heaven's sake, don't be! Now's your chance. Pretend you're hard hit. Make an impression. *Act* for all you're worth!

CAMPBELL. Well, I was hard hit. I am.

DR. WILSON. At it, then. Keep it up! [*In*

the following scene Campbell acts as a man does who is a little delirious or drunk.]

[*The other women all come in each with a glass of water and stand round holding the glasses much in evidence and simultaneously offering theirs to him. He looks at the glasses in a dazed way.*]

MRS. YOUNG. As you have a plethora of glasses, would it not be well to dash one in his face? I have heard it was salutary in cases of fainting.

[*Evelyn has come in quietly and stands behind his chair where he can not see her, holding a chunk of ice on his head.*]

CAMPBELL [*rather cringing from Mrs. Young*]. Please don't. [*Water is trickling from the ice on his head.*] I feel as though it had already been done, but maybe it is only water on the brain. I feel as though I had something on my mind, but I can't think what. [*He turns up his eyes as if to see what is on top of his head.*]

DR. WILSON. You're all right, old fellow. How do you feel?

CAMPBELL [*very feebly and with a great wink at Dr. Wilson while the women have turned their heads away for a moment*]. Extremely dotty. I seem to see round things in the air all looking at me. [*He points out, waving his hand, at the audience which he must be directly facing.*] I can't tell whether they are made of heads or golf balls or rings — I suppose it doesn't matter much if there is nothing in them.

MRS. YOUNG. Dear me, he's wandering, isn't he?

CAMPBELL. No, my dear lady, I am sitting right here. It's the heads and golf balls and rings that are wandering. I feel like a sick Cyrano de Bergerac — sitting here — as if I were occupying the center of the stage. Has any one done anything to my nose?

MRS. YOUNG. Oh, he is certainly delirious! Oh, Mr. Mellicent, please say whether you think he will be permanently affected?

CAMPBELL. Oh, lord, Mellicent, don't make the effort on my account! I know what's the matter with me — I drank too much tea. Ever drink too much tea, Mellicent?

MR. MELLICENT. I — I — I do not remember to have —

CAMPBELL. You're a lucky man not to have a memory, Mellicent. I wish I didn't remember so much. You're a happy man, I wish I didn't remember. But don't ever drink too much tea again. It makes queer things befall you, golf balls and planetary influences. Just now an aerolite from Venus fell on my head. If it had been from Mars it would have been more comfortably warm, so evidently it's from Venus — she's the one who hands you out the icy heart. [*As he says this Evelyn lets the piece of ice slip off and it slides down over his shoulder into his lap and thence to the floor — if fortunate enough across the stage out over the foot-lights and into the audience. At the same time the telephone rings. Miss Wright answers it. There is consternation and confusion.*]

CAMPBELL [*looking after the piece of ice*]. There goes my marble heart.

MISS WRIGHT [*at the telephone*]. Yes? this is the Country Club. Oh, you are Roger Campbell's grandfather. Oh, how do you do? Oh, indeed, I meant no insinuations. I have heard you have the gout. Yes, I knew you are all put out. Well, they have just carried him in. Yes, there has been a terrible accident and the doctor has been fearfully injured. We are — we are [*with deep gravity and impressiveness*] just keeping him alive with stimulants now. Good-by. [*Hangs up the receiver.*] Maybe that will fix him for a while! [*Peter, Roger's grandfather's man, comes in at the right, the other side of the stage.*]

DR. WILSON [*To Evelyn*]. That ice must have chilled you. [*He walks to her and takes her two hands, holding them and chafing them tenderly.*]

PETER [*deferentially at the door*]. I'm Dr. Campbell's grandfather's man.

CAMPBELL [*looking as miserable as possible*]. Hello, Peter! I've been pretty hard hit. Take me home! [*Peter helps him. He pretends to faint.*

[CURTAIN.]

ACT IV.

[*Hallowe'en evening of the same day, October 31st. The scene is the same as in Act I, the library in Evelyn's home. Norah enters from the right and Evelyn from the left. Evelyn is quiet, preoccupied. She is pale, dressed*

in a soft white gown, open at the throat, and is prettier than ever. They cross, Evelyn walking slowly and unconsciously. The maid hurries to the table, where she lights the lamp, the room had been rather dark. Evelyn throws herself into a chair and watches Norah dreamily, with troubled eyes.]

NORAH. Timmie's come back, miss.

EVELYN. Timmie?

NORAH. The little black cat, miss. He's just wandered in a few minutes ago. He found his way back all by his little self and was that tired, but so pleased to get home. I gave him a saucer of milk.

EVELYN. Oh, the dear little thing! We'll keep him this time, the sweet, blessed little fellow, to find his way back all alone!

NORAH. I'm thinkin' the fairies must have helped him, miss. [*She goes to the small stand and picks up the gloves Campbell left there. She puts them down, watching Evelyn furtively. Then she picks them up again and is about to walk away with them, when Evelyn turns upon her quickly.*]

EVELYN [*a little sharply*]. How many times have I told you not to move those gloves, Norah?

NORAH. I've dusted round thim, miss, for two days, according to your explicit directions, miss, an' now he'll niver come no more at all, at all, to claim thim!

EVELYN. Norah, what right have you to say that? What do you mean?

NORAH. I mane the accident, miss. [*Wipes her eyes with the corner of her apron.*]

EVELYN. Nonsense, it wasn't much of an accident. He was only hit by a golf ball and stunned a little. They thought it was worse than it was. It didn't prove to be anything serious.

NORAH. I wasn't referrin' to that, miss, but to the other accident. Me friend, Mr. O'Hoolihan, the policeman, jist told me —

EVELYN. What was it? Tell me.

NORAH [*looking away and with her handkerchief to her eyes.*] I'd rather not be the one to tell you, miss.

EVELYN. Norah, tell me at once.

NORAH. Well, thin, miss, me friend, Mr. O'Hoolihan — he's an officer, you know, miss — he —

EVELYN. Yes, go on. [*Excitedly.*]

NORAH. Mr. O'Hoolihan said — he told me —

EVELYN. Norah, out with it!

NORAH. Mr. O'Hoolihan said that Dr. Campbell's automobile was run into by an electric car and all smashed up.

EVELYN [*startled*]. Were there people in it?

NORAH. Oh, yes, miss, the car was full of people.

EVELYN. I don't mean the car, but the automobile. [*She gets up and takes a step toward the maid.*]

NORAH. Him, himself, miss, and was all desthroyed, miss, like a potato under a potato masher.

EVELYN. Not — not —?

NORAH. Yes, miss, jist that, miss. Kilt entoirely.

[*Evelyn takes a quick sharp breath like a moan. She grasps the back of the tall chair for support and leans against it. Norah has thrown her apron over her head as she finishes speaking and weeps aloud under it with great sobs that are said to relieve an aching heart. Evelyn finally speaks brokenly.*]

EVELYN. I can't bear this. I am going to him, straight to him. [*After a moment.*] Norah, you are not to tell any one about the accident or where I have gone. You are not to speak of it to any one, Norah. [*She goes out at the right door and is gone a moment. Norah stands with lowered apron and woe-begone face. Evelyn enters again, throwing over her shoulders a long and very becoming soft white wool wrap.*]

EVELYN. Be sure not to tell a soul, Norah. I am going to him.

NORAH. No, miss, I'll not tell a living soul.

[*Evelyn hurries out at right again. After she has gone, the maid wipes her eyes, looks for the gloves, takes them up, breaks forth into fresh wailing, lays them down and goes out at left, shaking her head, moaning and saying, "Oh, the poor young man," etc., in a sort of croon. The doorbell is heard at once. Norah comes in from the left, is hurrying across the room when she sees just in front of her Campbell, who is entering from the right. She utters a shriek and backs precipitately and frantically.*]

CAMPBELL. How do you do, Norah? Won't you let me come in?

NORAH [*from under her apron, which she has flung over her head*]. Is it yerself, sir?

CAMPBELL. I hope it is.

NORAH [*in a half-stifled voice*]. Oh, are ye sure, sir?

CAMPBELL. Why, yes, practically sure.

NORAH. But sure ye are a ghost able to come in with the door shut?

CAMPBELL. The door was standing open, so I walked in after ringing the bell. Is Miss Evelyn in?

NORAH [*lowering her apron a little at a time, cautiously, watching him*]. No, sir, she ain't in, she wint to — [*With an illuminating smile.*] But she told me not to tell yez where she wint till she came home.

CAMPBELL. Oh, she expected me, then?

NORAH. She'll be that glad to see ye, sir, when she gets back. I don't think she'll be gone long. [*Grinning very delightedly and slyly.*] Will ye please make yerself at home, sir. [*She goes out at left. Campbell puts down his hat on a chair and walks about taking off his gloves, which he deposits on the rim of his hat. He walks around the room, looking at things, and reads to himself with exaggerated interest the titles of the books. Goes to the table, finally sits down in a chair with his back to the right entrance, crosses his legs with an attempt at elaborate ease and commences to read. He is able to keep still only for a few moments, flings the book away from him and gets up and walks about*

again. He goes to the low bookcase and picks up the pot-pourri jar, examining the contents, puts it down again. He walks over to the left front of the room and is intently examining something with his back to her when Evelyn enters from the right back — diagonally across the room from him. He whirls around and they stand still facing each other. She is white and intense, he flushed and excited.]

EVELYN. *You!*

CAMPBELL [*smiling with a sort of half embarrassed attempt to be at ease*]. I — I came for my gloves.

EVELYN. They would have been sent to you.

CAMPBELL. But they are still here exactly where I left them. [*He picks up the gloves and looks at her with a question.*]

EVELYN. When you found them, why didn't you go?

CAMPBELL. I was invited to stay. Norah said you wanted to see me.

EVELYN. Norah seems to have the truly Irish gift of foresight.

CAMPBELL. We felt alike about it. I suppose it was the consanguinity of the Celtic temperament. I am beginning to believe that I am neglecting that part of my inheritance — premonitions, foresight, omens, and other Scottish soul perquisites.

EVELYN. Have you come back to cultivate them here?

CAMPBELL. You put it in a more beautifully figurative way than I could have done.

EVELYN. Superstitions, symbols, and all such

follies. Are you going to study them scientifically or for their poetic value?

CAMPBELL. Miss Vaughn, I wish you could realize that I am terribly embarrassed. [*He thrusts one hand deep into his coat pocket.*]

EVELYN. You! Really?

CAMPBELL. Yes, it's unusual, I know. But I have to do a very — for me — unusual thing. I wish you would help me. [*Beseechingly, half whimsically.*]

EVELYN. What do you want me to do?

CAMPBELL. What do I want you to do? Oh, lord, I should think you would know! But I've got to get through my part first. Evelyn, I've got to acknowledge myself wholly in the wrong and to apologize to you from the bottom of my heart. Can you forgive me?

EVELYN. Oh, I was frightened to death by your accident just now!

CAMPBELL. My accident? Did I have another?

EVELYN. Oh, they told me you were killed!

CAMPBELL. So that's where you've been and why you went?

EVELYN. They said you were killed and I found you were not even scratched and I hated you for the horrible fright you gave me. Oh, I *hated* you. If you only knew how you made me suffer! They said your automobile was run into and you were killed.

CAMPBELL. I wasn't and it wasn't. It must have been some other fellow. I've had so many accidents that they've got into the habit of attributing them all to me. No, I haven't been

even scratched, not since the golf-ball. Except by my conscience. I was on the way to my Swastika — you are my Swastika — that is why I was so miraculously preserved this time.

EVELYN. You're laughing.

CAMPBELL. For heaven's sake, let me! I haven't for two whole days and four hours, fifty-two hours. It wasn't the things going wrong — I rather enjoyed that, for they acted as a counter irritant. And when I had lost the one thing that was worth while the rest wasn't even a bagatelle. "From him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath" and he won't mind. Also, what bothereth a man if he lose the whole world, having lost his own girl?

EVELYN. Oh, how can you be so flippant when the thing is so serious?

CAMPBELL. Maybe to hide my seriousness. It is a question of life and death to me. [*Becoming earnest and coming close to her.*] I have been a beast. I have had my cudgeling and I deserved it. I want to know if you will forgive me?

EVELYN. It isn't a question of forgiveness! Forgiveness is for strangers — it is a futile word to use between people who have been as close to each other as we have been. The thing is deeper. It is a question of understanding. And of respect.

CAMPBELL. I have gained some understanding both of you and of myself. I want to tell you that I respect you utterly and that I know now where all my happiness lies — it lies only in making you happy. I was a prig not to want

to wear the ring and I was a beast to refuse it. I will wear it or anything else you wish. It is for you to decide what you will do with me.

EVELYN. Oh, I was thoughtless and young and foolish to want you to wear it. But it hurt me so to have you think I was superstitious. Do you now? I must know.

CAMPBELL. No, but you like to play with it. I suppose it is the poetry of it that attracts you. It does me, too, for that matter. Evelyn, will you get the thing and put it on my finger?

EVELYN. But I must be sure. [*She takes a step towards him. He holds out his arms.*] No, not yet. We must be sure. Do you understand me?

CAMPBELL. I think I do, but no one can be sure of that. The thing I am sure of — and it is the only thing that matters — is that I love you enough to love all the queer little things you do just because they are *you*. I appreciate you now, I don't criticize — there's a difference. Please get the fool thing and put it on. Good lord, I want it so.

[*Evelyn goes to the pot-pourri jar and extracts the ring therefrom. Campbell follows her, not too near.*]

CAMPBELL. In that? I picked that up a few minutes ago and was tempted to open it.

EVELYN. Yet even now you are not retreating from your position in the least. [*Smiling.*]

CAMPBELL. Of course I wasn't drawn to the jar in any occult way. It was the rose leaves I wanted to smell. [*He grins and holds up his finger.*]

EVELYN. I meant if you didn't come at last, to drop it into the river.

CAMPBELL. But you can't drown bad luck. It has more lives than a cat.

EVELYN. But this is good luck. I didn't want it without you. I give it to you and then you are to put it on my finger, and I will wear it as your proxy.

CAMPBELL. No, you know I am not entirely reconciled to the little outlandish thing yet. Some people used to wear hair shirts next their tender bodies. With a person of my disposition it is more salutary to wear one's humiliation on the exterior for everybody to see.

[*He holds out his finger. They are both nervous and trembling. She fumbles a little and finally wedges the ring down to its place. He catches her two hands in his.*]

CAMPBELL. It was you that did it, dearest. You taught me sense, you made me come to you. You were in my dreams, in my thoughts. You were with me all the time. You were in everything. The sincerity, the sweetness of you.

EVELYN. Thought transference? [*Smiling.*] Don't grow superstitious, dear.

CAMPBELL [*smiling, too*]. I don't know. But what does it matter? What does anything matter? So that we have this wonderful elemental thing — this love! It is the good luck that makes everything else come right.

[*He takes her in his arms. Just then Norah comes in at the door left, unconscious of the tableau and her intrusion, with the black kitten in her arms. She smiles and pretends to*

look abashed, holds up the little black cat towards them as if in benediction and then silently and coyly retreats on tiptoe.]

[CURTAIN.]

ENTR' ACTE.

TIME: *The present.*
PLACE: *A handsomely-furnished room in a modern mansion.*
PERSONS: ROMEO, JULIET, *and* CARMEN.

[*The scene is a dress rehearsal of a play some society people are producing for a charity. It has been written by one of them and is to be given under her direction. All the characters are noted personages of the Drama, among them Romeo, Juliet, and Carmen. Romeo and Juliet are lovers in the play. The two people who are to take the parts are in truth in love with each other, but their engagement has been broken through a misunderstanding due to jealousy. They are both proud. Romeo believes Juliet hates him, while Juliet thinks that he is in love with the girl who is to take the part of Carmen. Their affair has not been known to the others, hence the awkward situation which they have neither of them been able to evade, of their being cast for lovers. The play is to be given the next evening in this private house and the dress rehearsal is now going forward in the drawing-room. The curtain rises disclosing an unoccupied room some distance from the drawing-room. It is well and tastefully fur-*

nished and must have a long old-fashioned gilt mirror and a couch. There must be a large center space clear for dancing. Romeo enters, followed by Juliet. Romeo is a graceful fellow with a pleasant voice, and is good-looking, dressed in a beautiful costume of light blue velvet and satin with silver trimmings. Juliet is in white with gold in the trimmings of fillet and girdle, and the slightest touch of rose. She wears a pink rose, and she has blue eyes, is fair, impetuous, with a glowing loveliness. They are both absorbed in their manuscripts, learning their parts at the last minute after the manner of amateur actors. They both carry a large roll of manuscript in their hands.]

ROMEO. This is the room I meant. It seems to be empty. I guess we can go through our parts here. It's far enough from the rabble for us to be able to hear each other speak.

JULIET. I never heard such a howling mob.

ROMEO. That's what a dress rehearsal is — it's anarchy. [*They both speak in a sort of constrained politeness and consult their manuscripts.*] Um — um — where shall we begin?

JULIET [*fumbling with her manuscript*]. I suppose you can't put any restraint upon people who give their services.

ROMEO. No, you can't put a bit in a gift horse's mouth.

JULIET. When people give their services, they think that's all that can be asked of them. There's no further responsibility.

ROMEO. No, it's the feel of the cool silver dollar that produces a sense of responsibility. It's money makes the manager's automobile go. I'm sorry for the poor girl who is trying to manage this play. Some one told me she wrote it, too — did she?

JULIET. Oh, yes, she wrote it. That's why she is silly enough to think she knows more about it than we do.

ROMEO. That's just like an author. They always think they know more about their plays than the actors do. Why, an actor can always find a meaning the author never knew was there.

JULIET [*turning the pages of her manuscript again*]. Where shall we begin? [*She goes over to the couch and sits down.*]

ROMEO. Before we begin, would you mind telling me what charity we are giving the play for? So many people have asked me.

JULIET. Do you mean to say you don't know? [*Romeo shakes his head and they both laugh.*]

ROMEO. Of course I'm charitably inclined. Any old charity works me — if I can get any fun out of it.

JULIET. It is for the benefit of "The Society for the Erection of Portable Patent Swings for the Children of Scrub Women." They were dreadfully afraid the League would get ahead of them with their operetta, but they have beaten the League out by a week.

ROMEO. What league?

JULIET. Oh, "The League for the Distribution of Free Sand Piles for the Orphans of Street

Car Motormen." The two charities are ready to cut each other's throats, you know.

ROMEO. No, I didn't know. But it's me for the scrub women. The motormen's offspring ought to inherit enough sand.

JULIET. With your usual predilection you choose the sex. [*Smiling sarcastically and getting up.*] We must get to work.

ROMEO. Of course, right you are. Now I'm on. Shall we do the balcony scene?

JULIET [*fumbling with her manuscript*]. But we're not alone in that scene.

ROMEO. We ought to be, by rights.

JULIET [*sententiously*]. I'm very glad we're not. Oh, here it is — where Cyrano de Bergerac comes under my balcony and tries to make me think he's Romeo — that is, *you* — [*rather as if talking to herself*] — when you are really with me upstairs all the time. And I take him for one of the pirates in " Peter Pan."

ROMEO. Jove, hasn't she a menagerie? She has done up the whole English drama into a burlesque. That's like modern nerve, 'specially of the American variety. Imagine Faust and Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch in the same breath. They talk at once, you know.

JULIET [*without smiling and still at her manuscript*]. Of course, they're both philosophers.

ROMEO. And of the two, I think Mrs. Wiggs the less objectionable.

JULIET. Your predilection for the feminine again. Oh, yes, let's begin where I tell you not to eat any green apples as you go home through my orchard. Oh, and by the way [*in a very off-*

hand manner], in the balcony scene or anywhere else you are not to kiss me. They all say you are going to.

ROMEO. The play calls for it.

JULIET [*sarcastically and not looking at him*]. My copy doesn't.

ROMEO. Perhaps they left it out in order to give you a pleasant surprise.

JULIET. You might refer to other copies.

ROMEO [*bridling*]. Do you mean to insinuate that I inserted that stage direction in my copy?

JULIET. I don't insinuate anything but I give you fair warning that if you try it, I shall slap you. [*Speaks slowly and firmly but lightly.*]

ROMEO [*haughtily and looking very angry*]. You evidently think that I am extremely anxious to kiss you.

JULIET. Oh, not me, particularly. But I shall be looking very nice — and I know you. I warn you.

ROMEO. You don't know me so well maybe as you think you do.

JULIET. Oh, yes, I do. Every girl knows the man who has — who has —

ROMEO. Been in love with her.

JULIET. Thank you. Yes, been in love with her. But she is foolish to tell him so.

ROMEO. It doesn't make much difference whether she tells him or not, he feels it anyhow, like a sort of uncomfortable subconscious fact in the pit of his stomach.

JULIET. You always were figurative.

ROMEO. Thank you. [*Looks down at his figure and then strikes an attitude in front of the*

long glass and regards his reflection. Juliet also surveys him up and down.] I have had one or two compliments upon it but I scarcely expected one from you — now.

JULIET [*in a sort of embarrassed coolness*]. Oh, I'd like you to know that I think it is awfully hard on you to have to make love now to a girl you hate, but you needn't think it's very much pleasanter for me.

ROMEO. I don't.

JULIET. And I want you to understand distinctly that I had nothing whatever to do with casting the characters of this ridiculous play.

ROMEO. It would never have occurred to me to credit you with so much craft.

JULIET. Oh, you think I'm not smart enough to cook up something that would make you uncomfortable?

ROMEO [*gesturing with his hand to his stomach*]. I have already alluded to a man's subconscious sensation. I ate what you once cooked up for me.

JULIET. It isn't exactly delightful to be thought stupid.

ROMEO. I never thought you stupid. But you have always attributed to me whatever thoughts you thought I ought to think, and never believed me when I swore I could think other thoughts. Keep right on doing it. It doesn't make matters any worse.

JULIET. I do so hate a stubborn man.

ROMEO. Don't put yourself to the embarrassment of expressing your feeling toward me. [*He goes over to a chair and sits down.*] Since

you broke our engagement [*looking at his manuscript*] — I haven't deluded myself.

JULIET. Whether you believe it or not, I did not have anything to do with casting this play. Or rather, I tried very hard to have it cast differently. I wanted them to let Carmen take the part of Juliet. I know how agreeable it would be for you to play with her.

ROMEO [*curtly*]. So good of you.

JULIET. But there was the song and [*with a little malice*] — she can't sing.

ROMEO. Perhaps not, but I understand she can dance. It's rather fashionable nowadays. Has almost superseded singing, hasn't it?

JULIET. With you, doubtless. You always were so up-to-date.

ROMEO. Always were. [*Getting up.*] By Jove, you keep referring to the past like the haunting ghost of a man's first wife.

JULIET. I hope Carmen's dancing will give you enough joy to enable you to bear my singing. I'm sorry you can't have her in my part.

ROMEO. Thank you, I can get along without your pity. Why don't you keep a little of it for yourself? It seems to me that you have to pretend to a little fondness for me, too.

JULIET. Oh, only in a song and a song is so impersonal. Anyway, I'll sing it to the audience.

ROMEO. In the legitimate way — with your left eye on the leader of the orchestra and your right eye on the gallery, with the fingers of your left hand tearing up my wig and your right hand gesticulating to whomsoever may be looking.

JULIET. You needn't be afraid that I'll touch your wig. It's too bad this play couldn't have been given a month ago when we were in love with each other, isn't it? Don't you think we might as well go on with our parts now?

[*They both refer to their manuscripts again.*]

ROMEO. It's the balcony scene I need most to go over. Here, sit on this chair [*he hands one out to the center of the room and she sits down in it*] and I'll sit on the arm. [*He sits down on the arm of the chair and puts his arm round her. She immediately starts up and away from him.*]

JULIET. It's not necessary for you to do that.

ROMEO. But I have to in the play.

JULIET. You do it quite naturally enough without any rehearsing.

ROMEO. Oh, if you are going to be so particular, there's no use in rehearsing at all.

[*Carmen enters unobserved from the same door at the side through which Romeo and Juliet came. She is rather small, is dark, gay and piquant. She is dressed in brilliant red and carries a tambourine.*]

CARMEN [*aside*]. Oh, look who's here! Hello, Romeo and Juliet, billing and cooing as usual? [*Romeo jumps to his feet and Juliet and he both look embarrassed and very much annoyed.*] Please don't let me interrupt you.

ROMEO. We just came in here to rehearse.

CARMEN. Of course. It's quite natural, I'm sure, that you should like to do it alone. That's one advantage of having rehearsals in a private house — the — lobby rooms. Because, you know, many come to rehearse who remain to play.

ROMEO. But why on earth should they want to give a play as big as this one in a private house? It ought to be in a hall. A big play for a well-known charity — the — the — [*looks appealingly at Juliet*].

JULIET [*prompting him*]. "Society for the Erection of Portable Patent Swings for the Children of Scrub Women."

ROMEO. Yes, just what I was going to say.

CARMEN. I don't entirely wonder that you hesitated to say it. Why, my dear boy, by doing this the *elite* of the *blanc mange* hope to entice the *hoy-paloy* to come and thereby to rake in the dirty dollars of the *hoy-paloy* by the inducement of the opportunity of entering a house they would never have the opportunity of seeing otherwise. It's the diplomacy of philanthropy. But, dear me, go right on with your rehearsal, don't let me interrupt you. I just came in here to see if I could find my slippers.

ROMEO [*stepping forward, glad of an excuse*]. Can I be of any assistance to you?

CARMEN. Oh, will you? You are so kind. You see it is very awkward. I can't remember where I left my slippers, the ones I am to dance in. It's awfully awkward.

JULIET. I should think you might be. Everything depends on the slippers, doubtless.

CARMEN [*sweetly*]. Not everything, dear. There are a few other things — myself, for instance.

ROMEO [*gallantly*]. Which means your gracefulness.

CARMEN. Oh, thank you. [*Courtesies to*

him.] What a courtier you are, Signor Romeo!

ROMEO. Oh, nothing to mention.

CARMEN. But if you are used to slippers, they are almost necessary.

ROMEO. I should think so.

JULIET. Quite like morals.

CARMEN. Yes, slippers and morals are connected, aren't they?

JULIET. In early youth.

CARMEN [*sweetly*]. Yes!

JULIET. Spanking — that obsolete thing — the application of morals by the slipper.

CARMEN. Oh, I was referring to their mutual absence from the modern dancing. Do you know, I hate vulgar allusions.

JULIET. So do I. Why do you make them, then?

ROMEO [*breaking in*]. I think I might as well go hunt your slippers.

CARMEN. Oh, you are *so* thoughtful!

ROMEO [*smiling somewhat grimly*]. I don't know that I'd call it that.

CARMEN. Oh, yes, you are. Look for them down at the front door and bring them back to me here. I'll wait for you.

JULIET [*haughtily*]. I'll not wait for you. If you think we need to go through our parts, you may look for me in the drawing-room with the others.

ROMEO [*to Carmen*]. I'll be back in a jiffy. [*To Juliet.*] I think we both need it awfully. [*Exit.*]

CARMEN. Isn't he a dear!

JULIET. Romeos are a necessary evil.

CARMEN. How awfully cynical.

JULIET. That's what people always say when you tell the truth. Romeo is like maple syrup — a little of him goes a long way.

CARMEN. Maple syrup is more comfortable to have round than gun-powder, which doesn't go a long way, but manages to send other things whooping. I am referring to Don José. [*Sits down on the arm of a chair.*] Well, I suppose we've all got to have lovers and you can take your choice between the two varieties: the kind that gets himself into trouble and the kind that gets you in. I prefer the kind that gets himself in.

JULIET. My dear, how experienced you are!

CARMEN. I reckon we all are, only some of us are more candid about it than others. Anyhow, I was just referring to our stage characters — weren't you? Well, the author of this play quite took the worthy English drama into her own hands and mixed it all up till it fairly resembles real life. It isn't my fault that she didn't give me my rightful lover, the Toreador, to fall in love with, but substituted Romeo in his place. So, I have to flirt with Romeo. It's really an awfully sensible arrangement, for in the end when Don José kills me, Romeo has you to fall back on.

JULIET [*ironically*]. Only, of course, it will be hard on him to have to put up with me after you.

CARMEN. Oh, I shall not make myself so fascinating to him as I could. [*Juliet turns to*

go.] You don't mind my flirting with him, do you, dear?

JULIET [*turning around abruptly*]. Why, certainly not. What possible difference could it make to me?

CARMEN. You don't know how it relieves me to find you so indifferent after — after — what seemed so obvious.

JULIET [*confronting Carmen icily*]. What seemed so obvious?

CARMEN. Oh, nothing to speak of — only that you were desperately in love with Romeo. [*She goes to the couch and sits down.*]

JULIET. I — with him!

CARMEN. I'm glad it seems so preposterous to you. Then I shall not feel so conscience-stricken when he — when he —

JULIET. When he makes love to you? Oh, dear no! You quite misunderstand. What possible difference could it make to me? Get all the pleasure you can out of it. [*Turns to go.*] I believe he does it very nicely. And it may not last.

CARMEN. Are you talking about the real thing or the stage?

JULIET [*indifferently*]. Either — both, if you like. [*Looking back over her shoulder as she walks out of the room*]. I think I hear my nurse, the Merry Widow, calling me. [*She goes out at one side just as Romeo enters from the other side. But they have not seen each other.*]

ROMEO. Ah, there you are still. I thought perhaps you'd not wait.

CARMEN [*throwing herself on the couch in a*

negligent, enticing attitude]. For you — I'd wait — ever so long.

ROMEO [*becoming a little more interested and approaching her*]. Would you? How long?

CARMEN. Oh, for you I'd wait for ages — for ever.

ROMEO. I shouldn't ask you. I never want any one to wait for me. With me it's touch and go.

CARMEN [*holding out her hand*]. Touch — and go — then. Good-by.

ROMEO. Jove, you're in a hurry. You want to get rid of me? This doesn't seem to be my busy day. Nobody wants me round.

CARMEN. Romeo, you certainly are a despondent and hot-headed youth. Do you think I want to get rid of you?

ROMEO. How on earth should I know? A man never knows what a woman wants except when she doesn't want it.

CARMEN. There's more truth in that than grammar. It sounds learned from experience.

ROMEO. It is.

CARMEN. Do you think if you leave me and go to her, you'll get such a warm reception from your Juliet?

ROMEO [*surprised*]. What do you know about it?

CARMEN. That's what I thought. Why do you go, then?

ROMEO [*smiling*]. Well, there's the rehearsal.

CARMEN. Oh, nobody's paying any attention to that. They're just getting what fun they can

out of it. Won't you stay here and play hunt the slipper with me?

ROMEO [*coming up to where she sits*]. Oh, I forgot to tell you that I couldn't find your slippers.

CARMEN [*making room for him to sit down*]. Couldn't you? [*He sits down.*] That's not surprising. What a nice little dagger. [*Playing with his dagger.*] They weren't there.

ROMEO. What? I beg your pardon?

CARMEN. The slippers. I say they weren't there. I knew they weren't. I hadn't lost them at all.

[*Romeo leans back in his corner of the couch and regards her as she leans back in her corner, and so they gaze at each other for a few moments.*]

ROMEO. Well, by Jove!

CARMEN. He's a great friend of yours — Jove — isn't he? You refer to him so often. [*Calmly.*] No, I hadn't lost my slippers at all. I just wanted to see if you'd leave Juliet to do something for me.

ROMEO [*laughing delightedly*]. You are a cool little specimen!

CARMEN. I wanted to see if you like me a little. Do you?

ROMEO [*coming closer to her*]. What would you do if I told you a very great deal?

CARMEN. Dance with joy. I can dance well enough in these slippers, you know.

ROMEO. Won't you? For me?

CARMEN. Why, yes, I might as well. I have

to rehearse it anyway. [*She gets up and begins to make ready for the dance. Music is heard. The music used for this dance is Espanita. She holds up her head, listening.*] Why, there's the music for my dance — they're playing it. [*She turns to look at him. He looks gloomy.*] Oh, my Romeo, methinks thou art too heavy.

ROMEO. I'm not heavy at all. I can dance, too.

CARMEN. I meant thy heart. I bid thee take love lightly. [*She begins dancing.*]

ROMEO. "As the leaves hang on the tree"?

CARMEN [*going on with her dancing*]. Wilt thou still be "young and foolish"?

[*She continues to dance, using a scarf in twisting folds over her head and about her body. Dances for him, looking at him all the while. He sits watching her, becoming more and more attracted. Watches her very intently. He sits over toward her on the sofa. She keeps on dancing. He hesitates, moves to the very edge of the couch and gives up to a rapt attention of her beautiful dancing.*]

CARMEN. Or wilt thou — come — to — me? [*Low and very slowly.*]

[*Romeo finally gets up and glides to her, joining his hands to hers, which she has stretched out to him, she leads him into the dance. She has been dancing alone for some minutes, they now dance together, and when they stop his right arm is behind her, his right hand holding hers and her head thrown back against his arm, her face looking up into*

his, their left hands in front of them also clasped. Just at that moment they stop. Juliet's voice is heard singing.]

JULIET'S SONG.

Take not, dear love, away
Thy lips so dear to me!
Dear is the night, oh, dark and wondrous
dear with thee,
And far away the day!

Go not, my love, I pray!
In yon pomegranate tree
The song, you hear, sweetheart, the song
can only be
The nightingale's love-lay!

No jealous, blushing day
Nor lark's song chiding me
For keeping thee, my only love, for holding thee,
Commands thee come away.

Oh, love, no longer stay,
Even I must bid thee flee,
Hark, hark, it is the lark, and in the east
I see
The morning's roses gray!

Oh, love, begone, begone,
It is the envious dawn,
Haste, dear, away!

[*When he first hears her singing, Romeo raises his head, turns it as if drawn in the direction of the singing, till his face is entirely away from Carmen, who watches him intently. He gradually releases her and his arms drop to his side. Juliet sings her song through and as she does so Romeo gradually turns completely from Carmen and finally stands with his back to her and facing toward the singing voice. He raises his head and stands with parted lips, listening. A smile comes over his face and he seems to have completely forgotten Carmen. The music approaches. Romeo takes a step forward, Carmen nods as if in understanding, smiles, throws him a kiss and runs silently out of the room in the opposite direction from the singing. Romeo does not notice her. The song ceases and Juliet enters. Romeo takes a step forward impulsively to meet her, but she haughtily raises her head and gives him a cold, questioning look.*]

ROMEO. You'll not resent my admiration of your song?

JULIET. And not the singing?

ROMEO. I meant the singing.

JULIET. They're all asking for you at the rehearsal. The men say you're soldiering, you're not helping to dress the scenes and ought to take your share of the heavy work of carrying chairs and things, and the women say you're off somewhere flirting.

ROMEO [*looks around and sees that Carmen has gone*]. You see I am alone. [*He smiles.*]

JULIET. Yes, I don't see whoever has just gone.

ROMEO. Perhaps you don't see why she went, either.

JULIET. I am not interested in her motives.

ROMEO. I don't think it was a motive.

JULIET. I am not interested in her impulses.

ROMEO. I don't think it was an impulse. My, but your answers are bromidic!

JULIET. I am bromidic.

ROMEO. No, by Jove, you're not! You're anything but that — you're as rare as roses in a desert.

JULIET [*with a smile*]. You mean I'm impossible.

ROMEO. Not quite — thank Heaven! — but improbable. A near miracle.

JULIET. I am bromidic and I will be bromidic if I want to. I am not interested in her motives nor her impulses nor anything else about her. I am not interested in her.

ROMEO. Who?

JULIET. Carmen, of course.

ROMEO. Neither am I.

JULIET. Oh!

ROMEO. Seems like a lie to you, doesn't it?

JULIET. Very much.

ROMEO. Well, it isn't.

JULIET [*advancing*]. Are you ever coming back to the rehearsal?

ROMEO [*advancing a step toward her*]. Not so long as I can keep you here. Not till your nurse has called you twice and thrice and four times that. Not till those Montagues and Capu-

lets in there [*gesturing in the direction of the rehearsal*] have all murdered each other in their wretched wrangling.

JULIET [*smiling*]. They bid fair to.

ROMEO. Your song was wonderful. It made me forget everything — that we had ever quarreled — that you had changed. [*She gives a quick start and questioning look at him.*] It took me back to the time when I was happy — and for these few minutes afterward I am still in my dream. I cannot pull myself out of it. Do you remember that night in May?

JULIET [*breathing tensely*]. Yes.

ROMEO. In your garden where the locust tree was all in bloom, and the day-time busy bees had left it to the night and to you and me. And the whole world was sweet with the blossoms' fragrance.

JULIET [*smiling*]. It was the pomegranate tree.

ROMEO. And in the branches late — oh, very late — we heard a little bird wake and sing a few sleepy notes?

JULIET [*smiling*]. It was the nightingale.

ROMEO. And not the bird of dawn, the spotted-breast thrush, though love would have me stay until that same brown thrush —

JULIET [*laughing softly*]. You mean the lark.

ROMEO. — would joyfully announce the morn, the dewy, sweet, gray morn, that comes so silently and wakes slowly, deliciously, as does a maid from sleep, and blushes into the warm fair rose of perfect day.

JULIET. Ah, Romeo!

ROMEO. But whether it be by the white light of the moon —

JULIET. "Oh, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon!"

ROMEO. — or by the full and rosy glow of day, whether it be in the warm scented night when small white moths go idly flying by like little quiet ghosts, and our low words are scarcely heard even by each other, or in the open street and in the truth of noon [*he extends his hand and taking hers, falls on his knees and bends over it*] I — love — you! [*His voice is low and slow and ardent.*]

JULIET. My Romeo!

[*He rises and keeping her hand stands gazing at her.*]

ROMEO. Ah, tell me a little, give me a little joy!

JULIET. I love thee, too, yet, sweet, it was the lark and not the nightingale, and fear barks ever at the loitering heels of love.

ROMEO. I do not fear when I can see thine eyes — thine eyes that are more bright than stars in spring. Or feel thy hand — thy hand that is more soft than spring's night wind. Or hear thy voice — thy voice that is more mild than showers of spring. Or — [*leaning closer to her*] drink thy breath — thy breath that is more sweet than locust flowers.

[*For a few moments they stand close, gazing into each other's eyes, then suddenly she pulls away from him as if recollecting herself.*]

JULIET. We — we have been rehearsing!

ROMEO [*in an assumed, matter-of-fact tone*]. Yes, acting our parts.

JULIET. You were saying your lines.

ROMEO. They are easy lines.

JULIET. But you thought you were in hard lines!

ROMEO. They become easy when you pull the strings.

JULIET. I was acting.

ROMEO. But now it's between the acts — the *entr'acte*. Besides, I wasn't acting. I haven't been all through.

JULIET [*slowly and in amazement*]. What — what are you saying?

ROMEO. Saying? Saying? Why, saying I love you, of course. Saying I'm crazy about you — crazy as ever. I was too proud to let you know — but, Jove, what's the difference? You may as well know. I'm so miserable I don't care who knows.

JULIET [*catching her breath*]. You — are — so — odd!

ROMEO. Worse than odd. I'm a fool — a mere fool.

JULIET. Is it so silly to care for me?

ROMEO. Pretty silly when you despise me.

JULIET. But isn't unrequited love noble? [*Romeo opens his lips but says nothing, giving her a withering glance.*] Besides, how do you know I don't? You haven't asked me for ages — not since we quarreled.

ROMEO. Jove, but you're trying!

JULIET [*overstrained and crying at last*].

Yes, trying, trying as hard as I can [*in a tearful voice*], but you won't catch on! [*Smiling at him wistfully through her tears.*]

ROMEO. Do you mean —?

JULIET. Yes, I do. That's just it! That I'm a little silly and crazy and everything about you, too!

ROMEO. You — you — witch! [*He extends his arms to her and takes a stride toward her. She holds out her arms to him, too. The curtain falls just as he reaches her.*]

A WOMAN'S A WOMAN FOR A' THAT.

CHARACTERS AS THEY APPEAR.

MRS. STYMIE.
MARGARET BLUFWELL, M.D.
NIBLICK STYMIE, *Mrs. Stymie's only son.*
MISS IRIS, *a trained nurse.*
A VETERINARIAN.

[SCENE: *The sitting-room in Mrs. Stymie's summer cottage, the Gables, at Little Neck Beach. Little Neck Beach is a little old New England fishing village that has become a fashionable watering-place but still retains its crusted characters and picturesqueness. The sitting-room has wicker furniture, including a rocking-chair and a couch, a table is strewn with books and magazines — summer literature; the windows, half curtained, give a view of the sea. Mrs. Stymie enters, followed by Dr. Blufwell. Mrs. Stymie has much more money than she was born with. She is dressed in the extreme of the fashion but her diction has not kept pace with her clothes. Dr. Blufwell is extremely tailored and wears eye-glasses.*]

MRS. STYMIE. Well, Doctor, what do you think is the matter with my poor boy? [*With much agitation.*] You may as well tell me, for

I've got to know sooner or later and I've steeled myself to bear anything. [*She weeps aloud.*]

DR. BLUFWELL [*patting her on the back and smoothing her arm*]. In times like this, Mrs. Stymie, we must be brave. When the situation demands our womanly fortitude, we must — er — we must — ah — not fail. For that is where we women show our strength. Men are of larger frame than we and have more extensive muscular development and unquestionably they are an important factor in the industrial world; but when it is a matter of intrepidity, of high heroism, dear Mrs. Stymie, we are undeniably their superiors. Fortitude is a feminine virtue.

MRS. STYMIE. And I am doing my best to be fortuitous!

DR. BLUFWELL. Think of your dear son and try to be calm.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, I'm cam, can't you see I'm cam! [*Wrings her hands.*] Tell me the wust!

DR. BLUFWELL. Let me feel your pulse. [*Mrs. Stymie thrusts her arm out straight into the Doctor's face, daubs her eyes with her handkerchief, winks hard and gives other signs of great emotional excitement.*]

DR. BLUFWELL [*half to herself*]. Are you sufficiently prepared? That is the question.

MRS. STYMIE. Tell me the wust!

DR. BLUFWELL [*keeping her hand, soothing and patting her*]. It is my opinion after a most thorough examination and careful diagnosis that your son is suffering from compound oculi pupillae inflamatis.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, oh! Isn't that dreadful! It couldn't have been wus!

DR. BLUFWELL [*profoundly*]. Yes, indeed, yes. It might have been ascirides of the ligamentum pectimentum, or opaque anterior otapahlomia, or irido-cyclochroiditis, or —

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, Doctor, don't go on like that!

DR. BLUFWELL. Or even this disease might be varied by distressing complications. But we hope to be able to control it soon and hold it in check. It may take some time, as the affection seems to be of some standing and has probably taken a firm grip of the patient and may prove stubborn, but we shall conquer it. We must be strong and patient and bear with the poor, dear young man.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, he's stubborn enough, I submit, though I don't know as you are the one to say it. A mother may say things about her own boy and the same things don't sound so very well coming from a young lady like you.

DR. BLUFWELL. You misunderstand me. I said the disease was stubborn, not your son.

MRS. STYMIE. Well, I don't see how that can be, I'm sure. In my experience it has always been the people as has been stubborn.

DR. BLUFWELL. Suppose we don't discuss it.

MRS. STYMIE. I was just going to ask you, do you feel as component as a man doctor? You see I never had a lady doctor before, but they said you and a horse doctor were the only ones here, and so I had to have you or him. Now, Doctor, don't be offended, I was just going to

say that when I heard you was a home — a home —

DR. BLUFWELL. I am of the Homœopathic school.

MRS. STYMIE. Yes, when I heard that you was a home pathetic I knew you was all right. I believe in home doctors every time. Do you think Niblick's disease is contiguous?

DR. BLUFWELL [*holds her hand*]. One moment, please. We shall have to have a trained nurse and several other commodities and I will telephone for them right away to lose no time. I can explain to you afterwards.

MRS. STYMIE. Don't lose a precious moment. The telephone is in that room, make yourself perfectly at home. [*The doctor goes out and is heard distinctly telephoning in the next room. Mrs. Stymie sits down and rocks wildly to and fro.*]

DR. BLUFWELL. Hello, give me West 19. Hello. Is that Miss Iris? Yes. Can you come right over to Mrs. Stymie's, the Gables, you know, to take charge of a case? Yes. It is a very particular case. It is compound oculi pupillae inflamatis. [*Mrs. Stymie groans and shakes her head as she rocks violently.*] And, by the way, to save time, will you stop at the barber's and order some leeches sent over?

MRS. STYMIE. Leeches! Oh, my goodness gracious!

DR. BLUFWELL. We shall have to put them on the patient's eyes, you know. Yes. Of a most virulent character. I shall expect you immediately, then. Good-by. [*The doctor comes*

back into the room.] That is most satisfactory. Miss Iris is a most excellent nurse and will take charge of your son.

MRS. STYMIE. That is just what I am afraid of. Trained nurses are so dangerous.

DR. BLUFWELL. Dangerous?

MRS. STYMIE. Yes, she'll most likely marry him.

DR. BLUFWELL. Marry him?

MRS. STYMIE. That's what they do every chance they get. She's likely plotting it all out on her way over here now, the little cat! Oh, I don't see how I can put up with such impudence. It's more than a devotional mother can bear. But maybe you want him for yourself? You needn't. Niblick isn't a marrying man. And it won't be worth while for either of you to set your cap for him.

DR. BLUFWELL. I set my cap? Let me free you at once from any such idea, Mrs. Stymie. I have no intention of marrying your son, or desire to do so. If you consider it worth your while, I am now prepared to explain to you the nature of this disease.

MRS. STYMIE. Now, Doctor, don't you get mad. You're so insensitive.

DR. BLUFWELL. Compound oculi pupillae inflamatis is a distinctly modern disease. It was discovered quite recently by a learned oculist of St. Andrews. It affects the pupil of the eye and is produced by the game of golf. That is to say, by the too strenuous habit of the patient or player of keeping his eye on the ball.

MRS. STYMIE. You mean the ball in his eye.

DR. BLUFWELL. No, I mean his eye-ball — or rather, his eye on the ball.

MRS. STYMIE. But how could he? His eye's in his head.

DR. BLUFWELL [*firmly*]. His eye is on the ball, if he plays golf. And this continuous circumstance produces lesions of the nerves, muscles, and the blood vessels. The venus and arterial fluids collect about the eye and it is necessary to apply leeches.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, Doctor, you wouldn't put leeches on my dear boy? [*Dropping into a chair.*]

DR. BLUFWELL. Dear Mrs. Stymie, remember your sex and be brave. One of woman's special aptitudes for the profession of medicine lies in her sympathetic temperament. [*Gesturing radiantly.*] We radiate sympathy and love and so render it easier for people to bear trouble and pain. Let your nature rest upon mine, Mrs. Stymie. [*Sits down in a chair by Mrs. Stymie.*]

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, Doctor, you make it so bad. You talk as if you meant to cut off his head.

DR. BLUFWELL. So much depends upon the mental attitude.

MRS. STYMIE. Yes, indeed, if you are going to lose your head.

DR. BLUFWELL. That I find most people need to be treated mentally as well as physically. Therefore, I am trying to soothe you into a state of tranquillity and strength, so that you may not only go through your trial successfully but

be able to support your son. He will be so dependent upon you.

MRS. STYMIE. Indeed, then, he won't. He never is or has been. He is excruciatingly independent, he is. But he has to come to me for his money, he's on an allowance. I never made over any of the property to him, not an inch. Mr. Stymie left it all to me and, thinks I, keep it to yourself, don't make a fool old Mrs. Lear of yourself, thinks I.

[*The bell rings.*]

DR. BLUFWELL [*jumping to her feet*]. That must be the nurse.

MRS. STYMIE. Well, she don't let the grass grow under her feet, the minx. I'll go to see if it's her. [*She goes out of the room. The doctor relaxes, walks about the room and hums to herself in a girlish fashion. Mrs. Stymie comes back, followed by the nurse.*]

DR. BLUFWELL [*shaking hands with the nurse.*] How do you do, Miss Iris? [*To Mrs. Stymie.*] This is the best nurse we have, Mrs. Stymie.

MRS. STYMIE. She's pretty enough to kill or cure, I should think.

NURSE [*looking embarrassed*]. If you will only take me to my patient so that I can get to work. I ordered the leeches, Doctor, and they will be here right away.

MRS. STYMIE. I'll take you to Niblick. [*Mrs. Stymie goes out and the nurse bustles after her. The doctor, left alone again, hums a little song. Mrs. Stymie comes back, looking indignant.*] Well, I can see *her* little game fast

enough. She'll marry him if he gives her half a chance. She just grabbles with the case now as if he had no mother or other female relations. And of course, he'll like it. Men always do like to be mollycoddled, though some may pretend they don't. Oh, she'll get round him, but how will she feel when she finds he's a *pauper?* She'll have to come to me for money to buy her potatoes and onions and pay her cook or else do her own cooking.

DR. BLUFWELL. Don't you consider your son a trifle young to marry?

MRS. STYMIE. Of course he is, but that won't keep her from it. [*The nurse comes back, smoothing her apron and adjusting her cap.*]

NURSE. I'm all settled now.

MRS. STYMIE. Well, you beat the Jews!

NURSE. And ready to go to work. What are your directions, Doctor?

DR. BLUFWELL. The leeches have not yet arrived. So [*looking at her watch*], I shall go out and make another call. In the meantime, you may take his temperature and feel his pulse and arrange things for the application of the leeches. And prepare the patient for the operation. Soothe and encourage him until his nerves are calmed down and he is in a fit condition. Exert all your influence and sympathy. Remember the value of your being a woman and bring all the advantages of your womanly sympathies and tenderness to bear in overcoming his great nervousness. He will probably be very much agitated when he hears of the leeches. I shall be back shortly. [*She goes out, leaving Mrs. Stymie and*

the nurse alone together. They gaze at each other uncomfortably, Mrs. Stymie hostile and watchful, the nurse self-conscious and conciliatory.]

NURSE [*breaking the uncomfortable silence*]. Your son's eyes are very sore. He must have studied awfully hard.

MRS. STYMIE [*snappishly*]. Studied! He never studied in his life.

NURSE. Then is it the result of an illness?

MRS. STYMIE. No such thing. [*She sits down and rocks. She rocks violently much of the time.*]

NURSE. But *something* must have produced it.

MRS. STYMIE [*wrathfully*]. He played golf and kept his eye on the ball instead of in his head, where anybody's eye ought to be. Oh, he ain't such an easy one to manage as you think. He played golf all the time, and it went to his head, I believe, for he talked a lot of gibberage that no one could understand but some other cranks just like himself, and I think they just pretended to. I thought he would end in a constitute for the insane. That's why I came to Little Neck Beach for the summer — there wasn't any golf here. But what do those young scape-graces do but lay out a little golf court and make little pudding-greens, as they call 'em, in the back yards, to practise on. Oh, he's as set in his ways as anything. He's a perfect pillow of salt. And he hasn't got no money either. It's all in my name.

NURSE. I don't know whether I am ex-

pected to sympathize with him or exult with you over that circumstance.

MRS. STYMIE. Maybe you ain't no call to do either.

NURSE. I think I better go to my patient.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, you needn't be in such a hurry. Maybe Niblick can get along without you for a few minutes. He did tolerable well when he had only me to take care of him. Do you like nursing?

NURSE. I love it.

MRS. STYMIE. I should think that might depend on the patient.

NURSE. It is a noble profession.

MRS. STYMIE. How long have you been at it? You sound like a beginner.

NURSE. Oh, I am an old nurse.

MRS. STYMIE. Well, for goodness' sake, how old was you when you begun?

[*Niblick enters in a long dressing-gown and slippers. He is indigo about the eyes, sunburned, and generally very forlorn looking.*]

MRS. STYMIE [*throwing up her hands, aghast*]. Oh, Niblick!

NIBLICK. If the nurse won't come to the patient, the patient must come to the nurse, à la Mahomet. I'm tired of that hole upstairs and my eyes hurt like the dev — like the dickens. I believe I'll go practise putting a little. [*To nurse.*] Would you mind being my caddy? I say, you're a sight for sore eyes!

NURSE. Oh, please, you oughtn't to be walking about in this way.

NIBLICK. Why not? This can't hurt my eyes — I'm not standing on my head.

NURSE. I know you are not, but the doctor left orders that you are to be kept very quiet.

NIBLICK. Well, I don't call this madly exciting, do you?

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, no, this ain't exciting at all, and you are not getting yourself all nervous and feverish with your paroquetting up and down, and your eyes — they're not a bit blue and sore, oh, there's really nothing the matter with your eyes.

NIBLICK. Mother is *i*-ronical.

NURSE. But really and truly you ought to lie down or at least sit down. You ought to be entirely still — the doctor's orders were very explicit on that point.

MRS. STYMIE. Niblick, why don't you mind the doctor's interjections?

NIBLICK. Do you know it is so singularly appropriate that my mother's name should be Stymie because — do you play golf? Well, it is so hard to get around her, you know.

MRS. STYMIE. You good-for-nothing boy, with your jokes, when you ought to be a-bed this minute.

NIBLICK. She's nobody's foo-zle, are you, mother? Well, if I can't putt I guess I'll have to puff. [*He goes to the table and takes up a cigarette box from which he extracts a cigarette.*]

NURSE. Oh, you oughtn't to smoke.

NIBLICK. That's what all the girls say.

NURSE. But you shouldn't do it.

NIBLICK. That's what the doctor says.

NURSE. But you mustn't.

NIBLICK. That's what my mother says.

NURSE. Smoke will be the very worst thing in the world for your eyes. If you could only see how blue and sore they look, you would take pity on them.

NIBLICK. I'd rather have you pity them.

NURSE. They are so blue they are actually purple.

NIBLICK. Are they? Isn't that nice? Do you remember the robber's daughter, "Gentle Alice Brown," in the ballad? She loved a gentleman with "pretty purple eyes." Do you remember? I wonder if any other girl would like a gentleman with pretty purple eyes. [*Scrutinizing her face.*] Oh, by the way, you have blue eyes, too — isn't that a coincidence? We might have a four-ball foursome, a four-eye-ball foursome, you know. Now, don't look offended. I didn't say high-ball. [*He is about to light the cigarette.*]

NURSE. Mrs. Stymie, we must do something to prevent this. He must not smoke.

MRS. STYMIE [*resolutely rocking*]. Very well, then take it from him.

NURSE. I'm afraid I can't.

MRS. STYMIE [*getting up*]. I'll hold it while you snatch it. [*They tussle with Niblick, Mrs. Stymie throwing her arms about him while the nurse snatches at the cigarette.*]

NIBLICK [*laughing then shouting*]. Oh, Jove, my eyes. [*He stumbles and they help him to a couch in the center of the back of the room, where he lies down with his hands over his eyes.*]

MRS. STYMIE. I told you so. [*The doorbell rings.*]

NURSE. That must be the doctor or the leeches. I'll go see. [*She goes out.*]

NIBLICK [*looking through his fingers, grinning, but his mother does not see him do it. She fusses about.*] What are they going to do with leeches?

MRS. STYMIE. Put them on your eyes.

NIBLICK. Who is, the nurse?

MRS. STYMIE. The nurse or the doctor, I resume.

NIBLICK [*chuckling*]. I rather fancy it will take both of them and I am willing to have the leeches for the fun of watching those two women. I bet they will be afraid of the varmints. Did you ever touch a leech, mother?

MRS. STYMIE. Goodness, no!

NIBLICK. Did you ever see one?

MRS. STYMIE. No, what are they like?

NIBLICK. A cross between a snake and a fish-worm.

MRS. STYMIE. Mercy me!

NIBLICK. If you never touched one, I suppose one never touched you.

MRS. STYMIE. Niblick, what do you mean?

NIBLICK. Oh, nothing, only I have a rather intimate knowledge of leeches and I was wondering how you would like them on closer acquaintance.

MRS. STYMIE. How did you find out so much about them?

NIBLICK. Well, you know boys are rather apt to find out about things — bugs and beasts and

beetles and things. And I was once a boy. [*With a deep sigh.*]

MRS. STYMIE. You never brought any into the house, Niblick?

NIBLICK. No, not leeches. There are not many houses swampy enough to suit their constitutions. But I used to wade in that pond in the woods back of grandfather's place, in order to let them attach themselves to my toes. It was an interesting experiment and fun to watch. They are really very intelligent little animals — they are not at all slow about catching on. [*The nurse enters with a pill box in her hand.*]

NURSE. Here are the leeches.

NIBLICK. In a pill box, too. Do I swallow one every hour until I feel the effect?

NURSE [*making a wry face and lifting the lid of the box, then clapping it down quickly again*]. Oh, the horrible things!

MRS. STYMIE [*walks to the nurse and they inspect the leeches together*]. Ain't they ugly? Ugh! They are the most disgruntling things I ever saw!

NIBLICK [*looking at the women with a wave of his hand*]. Behold the leech-gatherers!

> Gather the leeches while you may,
> Old Time is still a-flying,
> And that same leech that bites to-day,
> To-morrow may be dying.

MRS. STYMIE. Leech-gatherers, indeed! Not me! I wouldn't touch one of the squirmy things with a ten-foot pole. How they wriggle. Do they bite?

NIBLICK. Just try one. It is generally supposed they do. And that they not only bite but stay biting. That's their — what's the French for it, Miss Iris? — their *raison d'être*. And that's why anybody who puts his fangs into your leg and hangs on is called a leech. [*With solicitude.*] I believe you are afraid of them, mother.

MRS. STYMIE. Well, I guess I am, I make no bones about it. I never did like worms and these are far more disgruntling than any worms I ever seen. You'd best just shut them up, Miss Iris, till the doctor comes. She's so intricate that they won't frighten her.

NURSE. Can I have a pan of water and a drop or two of cream?

MRS. STYMIE. Certainly. I'll call the maid to get them for you. [*She goes out.*]

NIBLICK. What are you going to do with the water and cream?

NURSE. The water is to put the leeches in.

NIBLICK. Why do you put them in water?

NURSE. To tell which is the head and which the tail. They both look alike you know.

NIBLICK. Why is it necessary to tell which is the head and which is the tail?

NURSE. Because you don't want to take hold of them by the head — you seize the tail.

NIBLICK. Oh, I see.

Leeches are like poppies spread,
You seize the tail and not the head.

[*There is a knock at the door. The nurse goes to the door and is handed by a maid a pan of water and a small glass of cream.*

She sets them on a table and opens the box of leeches, pouring them into the pan of water.]

NIBLICK. Won't you please show them to me?

NURSE. I don't think you ought to see them, they are so horrible.

NIBLICK. I could look at you for an antidote.

NURSE. Oh, dear, they are trying to crawl out. [*She pokes at them with a paper-cutter from the table.*]

NIBLICK [*threateningly*]. If you don't bring them right here, I'll get up again.

NURSE. Oh, please don't do that.

NIBLICK. Look here, I bet I'm not fooling you, and I wouldn't want to if I could. I'll make a clean breast of it all to you. There's nothing the matter with my eyes. They were a little inflamed from the dazzling light on the water yesterday when I took a sail and that put the idea into my head. You see there's a garden party this afternoon my mother was going to haul me to, so I thought up this scheme to get out of going and to have a joke on her. I painted my eyes with blue water colors — fine, deep blue sea effect. Perfectly easy to produce.

NURSE [*shrieking with laughter*]. Oh, you perfectly dreadful young person!

NIBLICK. It worked out better than I could have dreamed. *You've* come. Do sit down. [*She sits down beside him, now much amused by him.*] Queer things, aren't they? Something like caterpillars, only they have no hair. They

remind me of Mexican dogs. That's right! They bear about the same relation to a caterpillar that a Mexican does to a real canine.

NURSE. They are dreadful things — so uncanny. It seems strange to me that doctors still use them. [*Continues to poke at the leeches.*]

NIBLICK. To me, too. It's all rot, you know. They might just as well use something decenter. Don't you bother with them any more. Just dump them into that Rookwood vase and set that ash-tray on top and let them go. They couldn't get out and they'll worry the life out of you that way.

NURSE. What a beautiful piece of pottery! [*Looking at the vase.*]

NIBLICK. Isn't it, though. It is made in my home, Cincinnati, you know. And it is all-fired expensive.

NURSE. I suppose it is the firing that makes it so.

NIBLICK [*laughing*]. Say, that's not bad — that. A hot shot, as it were. [*The nurse laughs.*] Well, I don't know, they say it's the art and they say art's long but it isn't so often that you have to pay the long cool green for the art that's long while time is fleeting. I play shorts myself. And I'm not long on art. Anyhow Rookwood is awful dear. It's a case of where an ounce of pottery is worth a hundred weight of clay.

NURSE. Then I should never dare to put the leeches into it.

NIBLICK. Well, do something with them. Dump them on the floor and step on them. You

can tell the doctor it was accidental or that I did it in a fit of delirium. I need your attention. My eyes hurt like the dickens [*with a grimace*] and I believe it would do me a lot of good to have you stroke my head. Kill the beasts — step on them.

NURSE. Oh, goodness, don't speak of such a thing! It would be much worse than cru — crush — crushing a caterpillar.

NIBLICK. You are mighty game to stand there poking at them when you really hate them so tenderly. Are you going to apply them to my head — their heads to mine — a head end collision? Or is it a collusion between the doctor and you? Which does it — you?

NURSE. I! Heaven forbid!

NIBLICK. But I thought trained nurses were nervy?

NURSE. So they are. But a thing like this is different. Quite different. It is in the nature of an operation and the doctor will do it. It is her place to.

NIBLICK. I bet she'll shy at it, too.

NURSE. Of course she will not.

NIBLICK. Of course she will. She's a woman.

NURSE. She is a doctor.

NIBLICK. She is a woman for a' that.

NURSE. But she is a doctor!

NIBLICK. What's in a name? A woman by any other name would be as weak.

NURSE. You are epigrammatic.

NIBLICK. You are sarcastic. But I forgive you. For I suppose you have to stand up for

each other. It's all in the day's work. I wonder if she really thinks I've got anything the matter with my eyes? Or if she's bluffing? The paint isn't even skin deep, you know. Please don't you give me away! [*Entreatingly.*] And I'll make a bargain with you to take you out as often as you want in my new sail boat — when my eyes get well again, of course. [*He grins.*] I wonder, though, about that doctor? Is she on or isn't she? I suppose

> She has knowledge of germs and of tissues,
> Of fevers and fractures and sprains,
> She knows the directions and issues
> Of the arteries, nerves and the veins,
> She is wise in the use of narcotic,
> She's past-master of agues and gout,
> She can manage a patient neurotic,
> She's a skilful physician, no doubt,
> But one thing will baffle her learning,
> When it comes to a deal with a leech,
> You can bet on a grand overturning,
> And there'll be a deal of a screech.

NURSE. Is that original?

NIBLICK. Well, everything is original once. Come, don't be mad. Let's be friends. [*He sits up.*] Put a book on them. There is one big enough to cover the pan. I said just now what's in a name, but I was only quoting, for I think there's lots in a name. They are most curious things. There is the name of Bunker Hill; that is — what would our old professors have called it? — tautological, for a bunker,— but you don't play golf — well, a bunker is a sort of lit-

tle hill itself. Then, there is your name, Iris — and behold! You take the eye of all beholders! Do you know I believe this disease I am suffering from is Iritis? [*Mrs. Stymie comes in again and the nurse and Niblick jump up.*]

MRS. STYMIE. Hasn't that doctor got back yet? It seems to me she might hurry a little.

NIBLICK [*moaning and lying down again*]. She is confounded slow, and me suffering so. Miss Iris here seems to have no feeling for me at all. She plays with those contemptible angle worms and lets me howl with pain all the while.

MRS. STYMIE [*glowering at the nurse*]. You shouldn't neglect your patient, Miss Iris. I'm shocked at you. [*Niblick grins.*]

NURSE. Oh, Mrs. Stymie, you don't understand. I can not leave these things a moment or they would crawl out, and there is really nothing I could do for him just now.

NIBLICK. You could stroke my head instead of letting me bear such tortures unaided and alone. You could soothe me and calm me down.

MRS. STYMIE. That is true enough, nurse. [*Sitting down.*] The doctor told you to prepare him for the alteration, to make him brave and to pacify him. There is so much in that, you know — that's what the doctor says. She says you have to doctor their minds as well as their bodies — I mean they have to, the doctors. And she says that lady-like doctors — I mean lady doctors are so sympathutic and loving, and that that is one of their special platitudes for the profession. We didn't have lady doctors in my day or I might have been one myself. I think it

is a very nice calling for a lady. Not only their loving and sympathutic natures, but the doctor says they are so much braver than men. And I myself know that they are much more used to houses and take to sickness more naturally, sickness being their natural spere, as you might say. [*The nurse puts down the pail on the table and sits down by it, while Mrs. Stymie goes on rocking in great undulations to and fro.*]

NIBLICK. But I thought you called in this doctor because she was the only one in the place.

MRS. STYMIE. Maybe I did, but that was before I looked into the matter of lady doctors.

NIBLICK. You prefer them to horse doctors. I believe you said there were only the two styles in the place, the lady and the horse, and it came to be a choice between them, the lady or the horse, a sort of lady or the tiger affair. She must be very popular to have to stay so long. Well, popularity pays its price, which aphorism, by the way, is double-jointed, I mean it works both ways. Popularity costs a huge sum in the beginning, but after a while it begins to pay for itself. It is what you might call a lucrative investment, if you don't mind the trouble. Mother, why don't you save time by going out to watch for the doctor?

MRS. STYMIE. Why, perhaps I'd better. [*She goes out and Niblick immediately gets up and goes over to the nurse.*]

NIBLICK. Won't you drop those blood-suckers now and kill them? That would be a case of the biter bit.

NURSE. I'm afraid it would be a bitter bite for me when the doctor comes.

NIBLICK. Oh, by the way, I wonder if she plays golf? So many doctors do. They have taken up the game recently, you know. And a very curious fact has been observed in regard to them. The surgeons invariably slice their balls, while the osteopathists always pull theirs.

NURSE. Are you very fond of golf?

NIBLICK. Well, rather. Our course at home is very hilly and some men object to it on that account, but I say everything has its ups and downs and the course of true golf never did run smooth. [*The bell rings.*]

NURSE. That must be the doctor now.

NIBLICK. Enter the doctor, commander of leeches! Now will she [*with elaborate gestures*] marshal her forces and bravely lead the onslaught. Look out for the fun! For the Lord's sake, now, don't you give me away! Remember the coming sails out on the deep blue sea — my little boat is a stunner, certain sure. [*He lies back on the couch and covers himself up with a rug as the doctor and Mrs. Stymie enter.*]

DR. BLUFWELL [*smiling benignly*]. Well, how are the eyes?

NIBLICK. Very painful, Doctor, very painful. When do you expect to have them cured? Don't you think it's *'igh* time?

DR. BLUFWELL [*patting him on the shoulder*]. I am greatly pleased that you are able to joke, Mr. Stymie. It augurs well for the future and proves that Miss Iris here has been doing her duty and preparing you for the coming ordeal.

NIBICK. She has spent her time most profitably in proving to her own satisfaction that a watched leech never crawls. I suppose, Doctor, you are not afraid of a leech?

DR. BLUFWELL. I? Certainly not.

NIBLICK. Because my mother here is. Most women are, I believe, afraid of — well, something or other. By the way, why is a woman like a woodpecker? Give it up? Because she can run up a long bill. Why is she different? Because a woman will turn from a worm while a bird bolts — it. By the way, have you ever noticed that it is never the worm who turns but always the woman. That's rather bad — isn't it? But what better can you expect from a poor fellow in agony like me. The victim of leeches will make foolish speeches.

DR. BLUFWELL [*she has been taking off her gloves and otherwise preparing for the fray*]. Nurse, is everything ready?

NURSE. Everything, I think. The leeches are here in this pan and seem to be pretty lively.

DR. BLUFWELL [*investigating them*]. Quite so. I think they will take hold nicely.

NURSE. And the cream is in this little tumbler.

DR. BLUFWELL. I see. Do you think you have prepared the patient sufficiently. [*Laying her hand on Niblick's shoulder.*] Do you feel quite calm and happy?

NIBLICK. Well, I'm not sure I ever sized up such a situation. [*Stares and blinks hard.*] I don't think I feel overly happy, though I felt

much worse when I was beaten ten down and lost the match for the club.

DR. BLUFWELL. Let me feel your pulse. [*She feels his pulse.*] Hum! Well, I think we may go ahead, nurse. His pulse is about normal and I think you said his temperature had not risen perceptibly. I will put on the cream. [*She dips her finger in the cream and dabs it around Niblick's eye — steps back and regards the effect with her head on one side.*] Now, you may apply the leeches.

NURSE. I?

DR. BLUFWELL. Certainly. Who else?

NURSE. *You!*

DR. BLUFWELL. Oh, no, indeed. It is the nurse's place to apply the leeches.

NURSE. But I — I — I can't touch them.

MRS. STYMIE. No more could I.

DR. BLUFWELL. But who else will?

NURSE. Why, *you,* of course.

DR. BLUFWELL. But I have to direct the operation. [*Niblick gives a suppressed snort.*]

NURSE. I am very sorry, but I never saw any one do it in my life and I don't know how.

DR. BLUFWELL. But I can easily tell you how. Just take hold of the tail.

NURSE [*giving a little scream*]. Oh, I couldn't, really! Don't you understand? I — I — I am *afraid* of them.

DR. BLUFWELL [*looking frightened*]. Nonsense!

NURSE. I can't, I tell you.

DR. BLUFWELL. But you must.

NURSE. I should let it drop.

NIBLICK [*giving an unearthly chuckle and is seen to shake*]. I — I believe I've got a chill.

NURSE. Doctor, you'll *have* to.

DR. BLUFWELL. No, it wouldn't do at all for me to do it. Isn't there some one else we can get?

NIBLICK [*coughing violently*]. There's the horse-doctor.

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, shall I send for him? Just as you say, Doctor. I can have Thompson go and fetch him at once, though I suppose his boots will be very muddy.

DR. BLUFWELL. Well, you see it's rather awkward, because I — I don't consult with him. He's — well, he's of a different school, you know. [*She walks up and down.*] Miss Iris, won't you — won't you try to — to — take hold of one of them — with a handkerchief, you know.

NURSE. Oh, please, Doctor, don't make me! They are such horrid things. They squirm and twist and act just like snakes and they grow in such dirty, oozy, slimy, boggy places. And then, besides that they do bite so. If I took one of them by the tail he would be sure to fling his head around and hit me and begin to bite. And when they take hold, you never, never can make them let go till they drop off, when they are quite full and can't hold another drop. They begin by being quite thin and they end by looking like toy balloons. Oh, I couldn't stand it, really, Doctor.

DR. BLUFWELL [*coaxingly*]. But just try it, won't you, please? [*Nervously.*]

NURSE. It makes the cold chills run up and down my back just to think of it.

DR. BLUFWELL. Here is my handkerchief. Just try. That one now.

NURSE [*trembling as she takes the handkerchief*]. I know I can't. It makes the cold chills run up and down my back. If it bites me I know I shall die. [*Some time is taken up while she hesitates and selects her leech. She finally takes hold of it by the tail. It wriggles, she screams and lets it fall back into the pan.*] It may cost me my reputation but it is utterly impossible for me to do it.

DR. BLUFWELL [*looking much worried. She walks up and down. Mrs. Stymie wrings her hands*]. It is a most embarrassing situation. Of course I can't consult with a veterinary, that is out of the question. And yet, who else is there? It is very unfortunate, Miss Iris, that you are so — so timid. Won't you try just once more?

NURSE. Oh, Doctor, I should just drop it again.

DR. BLUFWELL. I suppose I shall have to do it, though it — it — it's most unprofessional. [*Plenty of time is taken and the scene is very tense while the doctor seizes her handkerchief and after many false starts grabs a leech, holds it aloft, leaning away from it, and moves cautiously towards the couch. The leech wriggles, swings back, and the doctor trembles, jumps, and lets it fall to the floor, shrieking much louder than the nurse. All the women scream, Mrs. Stymie mounts a chair and Niblick shouts, then chokes*

and rolls over with his face to the wall to hide his laughter.]

NURSE. Oh, what shall we do? Do you think it will stay where it is?

MRS. STYMIE. Who will pick it up? I shan't stir till some one does. Oh, do you suppose it can climb a chair? [*She looks out of the window.*] Oh, the ways of Providence! There is that Horse-Doctor now!

NURSE. Oh, call him in! Call him in quick!

DR. BLUFWELL. Per — per — perhaps you'd better.

MRS. STYMIE [*gesticulating wildly from the window*]. Horse-Doctor! Horse-Doctor! Come up here quick. Hurry, Hurry, HURRY! He's coming! He's coming! He's running!

DR. BLUFWELL. I — I — I am so nervous to-day that my hand shook so I couldn't hold it.

MRS. STYMIE. I should think it did and a pretty state we're in now. That leech looks to me like it was moving. I do believe it is! If it starts to climb this chair I don't know what I shall do! Oh, if that horse-doctor doesn't come I shall have nervous persuasion.

[*The Horse-Doctor enters at this climax. He is a very dreadful person with full red whiskers and a red face. He wears an old rumpled silk hat, a violent red necktie, a mussed and muddy linen duster nearly to his heels, and he carries a carriage whip.*]

HORSE-DOCTOR. Well, is the house on fire or what on earth is the matter? I thought maybe somebody had been murdered or a suicide or burglars or —

MRS. STYMIE. Oh, you've saved my life! If you hadn't come —

NURSE [*stepping forward*]. You see — we —

DR. BLUFWELL. You see, we — we —

HORSE-DOCTOR. Yes, I see you.

MRS. STYMIE. The leeches, you know. We're all afraid of them. Look out, look out there, you'll step on it! We want to put them on —

NIBLICK. My eye!

HORSE-DOCTOR. Why, certainly. Anything to please the ladies. [*He picks up a leech from the floor in his fingers and advances with it toward Niblick.*]

NIBLICK [*jumping up with great alacrity*]. But not this afternoon. It's too late for a garden party now. That leech will have to do with just a cracker at home.

[CURTAIN.]

A FAN AND TWO CANDLESTICKS.

(AN OLD-FASHIONED PARTY ON ST. VALENTINE'S NIGHT.)

[SCENE: *A room at the end of a great hallway in a fine old Georgian mansion. The entrance is heavily curtained off and there are heavy hangings at the window. There is an open fireplace with great logs burning and two silver candlesticks, lighted, stand on the mantelpiece. The furniture is Georgian mahogany with a rococo touch in some bits. It includes a spinet, a little gilt chair, a spindle-legged table, a large mirror in a gilt frame, and a settee. The entrance is at the center of the back of the stage, the window at the left, the fireplace at the right, settee in front of the fireplace, spinet in the left corner, gilt chair near it in front of the window. Everything is very established, formal, decorative, as in the eighteenth century. Music is heard of flutes, violins, bass-viols, and other instruments that made up the orchestra of that day. A very pretty girl enters in ball-gown of the eighteenth century, and with her a young man. The girl is fair and flushed, with blue eyes, and has charm and latent vivacity. She is dressed in corn-color and white satin with trimmings of lace and pearls, has powdered hair, high-heeled*

white satin slippers with buckles, and a pink rose in her hair. The young man is good-looking, blond with dark eyes and a certain smoothness that indicates he will be fatter when the years are added. He wears a powdered wig, a light green satin coat, white satin waistcoat, old-rose knee breeches of a pale shade, silk stockings and buckled shoes.]

RALPH. You're very good to come with me,
I was afraid you'd not agree.
To leave the dancing in the hall.
NANCY. When one's invited to a ball,
One is expected, sure, to dance,
Unless one meets with the mischance
To sprain one's ankle or to fall
Into a dreadful fainting fit! —
I hope I'll not —
RALPH. Oh, don't do it!
NANCY. At least I'll try not at this ball.
[*They both laugh. The music is heard.*]
RALPH. But where they're dancing 'tis so gay
I was afraid you'd wish to stay,
NANCY [*archly*]. Perhaps I did.
RALPH. But yet you came.
NANCY. Why, one must always play the game.
If you had asked instead, perchance,
To have the pleasure of a dance,
I would have stayed and danced with you.
Don't you expect a maid to do
Exactly as you ask her to?
RALPH. Why, yes, I do, and yet suppose
A maid has several different beaux,
She can't in truth content them all.

NANCY. She can, in turn, at one short ball.
RALPH. Yes, but I'm talking now of life,
I'm asking you to be my wife.
NANCY [*starting*]. Good gracious, Ralph, you don't prepare
A maid for such a sudden scare!
[*She moves over to the spinet and sits down on the stool. He follows her.*]
RALPH. Scare? Why, I thought you always knew
It was the end I had in view.
NANCY. I didn't. And yet if I did,
You had your end so safely hid
I wouldn't ever *dare* to guess
The secret you would fain repress.
RALPH. It was no secret and I vow —
NANCY. You never mentioned love till now.
[*Slowly and after a slight pause.*]
If I bethink me it doth prove
You *still* have never mentioned *love*.
RALPH. I thought you knew. I had my work,
I'm not a flirt and not a shirk,
One doesn't hurry into fate.
[*He draws up the little gilt chair and sits down in front of her.*]
NANCY. Did you not fear you might be late?
That some one might have got before
[*Footsteps are heard approaching.*]
And entered ere you tried the door?
[*Hugh comes in through the curtains, looks angry and disconcerted, then cools down and bows most ceremoniously and low to them. He has a rather brown skin with color in his*

cheeks, and has fascinating grey-blue eyes. He is dressed in rather grey-blue velvet coat, very pale yellow satin waistcoat, lavender satin knee-breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes.]

HUGH. I'm sorry, sir, your joy to spill
But Nancy promised this quadrille
To me.

NANCY. Of course, I'd quite forgot.

[*She rises and curtsies low to him.*]

And that reminds me, have you not
My fan?

HUGH. Your fan?

NANCY. Yes, I have lost
My fan, and am quite tempest-tossed
Concerning it, for, don't you see?
My dearest Grandma gave it me,
And it is quite the handsomest,
Oh, yes, and best and loveliest —

HUGH. Both fan and Grandmama I know,
And we had all much better go,
If it's not found, and quickly hide
Our heads beneath the river's tide.

RALPH. Oh, may I be of any use?
My ignorance is my excuse —
You didn't tell me of your —

NANCY [*reproachfully*]. Well,
You didn't give me time to tell.
You see now that I'm sore distraught

[*In the most appealing and adorable voice.*]

And if you had a little thought
For me, you'd both go hunt my fan!

HUGH. What man can do, then, shall do man!

[*He seems about to go, then turns back and*

confronts her. She is standing between the two men, Hugh on her right, Ralph on her left.]

HUGH. But, prithee, how will you reward
The one who finds?

NANCY. With my regard,
With gratitude and fair good will!

HUGH. With something else? The last quadrille?

[*There is a moment's silence, all three half smiling, the two men on either side of the girl regarding her with keenest interest.*]

NANCY. Why, yes, I promise last to dance
To-night with him who has the chance
To find my fan. Now, au revoir,
Be guided by some lucky star!

[*She sits down again on the stool before the spinet.*]

RALPH [*turning hastily to go and bowing low to Nancy as he is about to pass through the curtains*].
Don't fret, for we will find the fan.

HUGH [*amused and mocking*].
I almost think you are the man!
Then go and hunt — I'll take the bird
That's in the bush. For hope deferred
Did ever make me sick. So here
I'll stay with Nan. It would be queer
For us to leave her quite alone —
This is my time, the only one
Perhaps I'll have. Give you good luck!
I like you, Ralph, I like your pluck.

[*Hugh sits down on the little gilt chair and there is nothing left for Ralph to do but go.*

He smiles hopefully and reassuringly at Nancy.]

RALPH. Honor's the same in love and war,
I'll bring the fan, then *au revoir!*

[*Ralph bows himself out through the curtains. Nancy rises and goes over to the other side of the room. She seems disturbed and to try to evade Hugh, who follows watching her. He goes to the settee and stands behind it, making a gesture of offering her a seat. She stands looking into the fire.*]

HUGH. Won't you be seated, fair Nanette?

NANCY. My name is Nancy.

HUGH. But Nanette
Is used for rhyming with coquette.

NANCY. Perhaps you are the one to know,
They say you're such a heartless beau.

HUGH. I have been ever since I met
The pretty maid I call Nanette.
She'll neither give me back my heart,
Nor give me hers — such is her art
Of coquetry. Won't you sit down?

[*Nancy sits down on one end of the settee farthest from where he stands with his hand resting on the back of it.*]

HUGH. You have on such a lovely gown,
It doth become you e'en as gold [*gallantly*]
Sets off the pearl it doth enfold.

NANCY. It seems you haven't lost your wit [*smiling*],
Nor tongue to help make use of it.

HUGH. You think my wit's a thing apart
From my poor, luckless, lackless heart?

[*He comes round to the front of the settee and sits down on it as far as possible from her. Then he leans over and plays with the lace trimming on her sleeve.*]

HUGH. You think a man won't lose his mind
Because he loves a maid unkind?

NANCY. I didn't quite say that — and yet —

[*As if meditating something to prove her point and try him.*]

Why don't you make a chansonnette?

HUGH. For dear Nanette? The fair coquette?
I'll take your dare —some kind of rhyme
I'll formulate, while you mark time.

[*They are both silent a few moments, she watching him with a quizzical smile, he with brows knitted, looking hard at the floor.*]

HUGH. She lost her fan, did sweet Nanette,
It wasn't quite within her plan,
For while she played at the coquette,
She lost her fan.

Mayhap 'twas left in her sedan,
Or maybe in the minuet
'Twas stolen by some naughty man.

Just where it is I may not bet,
But nothing's plainer to me than
While trying some one's heart to net
She lost her fan.

NANCY. It seems you haven't lost your head!

HUGH. I'd rather have a heart instead.

NANCY. You wouldn't be so nice, so gay.
HUGH. I'd go contented on my way
Nor hang about and linger so
To hear a maiden's "Yes" or "No."
You know it is the day divine
That's sacred to St. Valentine,
The day a lover must confess,
The day a maiden should say "Yes,"
The day the little birds all mate
And bow to Love and nod to Fate.
NANCY [*hastily interrupting him*].
And yet the day of all the year
Is likeliest to be most drear.
I'm sure the robins have chilblains
Upon their little toes. The lanes
Are bleak and covered o'er with snow,
And listen — how the east winds blow!
Perchance there'll be a dreadful storm.
HUGH [*leaning to her*]
So much the more should hearts keep warm.
Ah, dearest, let me hear you say
The word I long for day by day,
The little word for which I wait!
NANCY [*nervously*]. It must be getting very late!
You haven't tried to find my fan.
HUGH. Why should I, since Ralph is the man?
NANCY. He isn't. And the last quadrille
Is yours, if you the terms fulfil.
HUGH. If I produce the fan, you'll give
The dance to me — now, as I live,
If with the dance your heart's thrown in,
I'll find the fan — I'll die or win!

NANCY. You're willing thus to trust to fate?
[*Footsteps are heard coming down the hall.*]
HUGH [*entreatingly*]. Say "Yes" before it is too late!
You'll give your heart with the last dance?
[*Nancy is very nervous and excited. She looks at Hugh with great earnestness and speaks almost in a whisper.*]
NANCY. *Yes!* Fate forfend me from mischance!
[*Enter Ralph through the curtains.*]
HUGH. Ah, Ralph, you wear a cheerful smile,
You've found it?
RALPH. No, I'll not beguile
You [*speaking to Nancy*] into hopes, for everywhere
I've searched with diligence and care.
[*Nancy sighs and smiles relief. The situation is beginning to assume a serious aspect to her.*]
NANCY. It surely isn't right at all
To spoil the pleasure of this ball
For you, and we'll abandon now
Search for the fan.
HUGH. Oh, no, I vow!
I'm to myself in honor bound!
That fan this evening shall be found.
NANCY. Oh, pray, what difference does it make,
Just for to-night?
HUGH. There is at stake
Something I care for.
RALPH. On the stair
I hunted — underneath each chair.

I'm very sorry, but I fear
'Tis lost — and yet perhaps 'tis here!

[*He says this as if with sudden thought and as if with inspiration goes to the mantelpiece, takes one of the tall candlesticks from it, and proceeds to walk about the room looking carefully on the floor for the fan.*]

NANCY [*rather nervously to Hugh*].

Why don't you take the other one?

[*Hugh goes to the mantelpiece and takes therefrom the other tall lighted candlestick and goes about the room as Ralph does, hunting on the floor and under the curtains and furniture for the fan.*]

NANCY [*her nervousness increasing, as she watches first one and then the other and finally gets up and follows first one and then the other*].

Oh, please don't bother any more,
I'm sure it isn't on the floor.
Give up the search, I beg of you!

HUGH. "Give up" was never yet my cue.

RALPH. To give up now I could not bear.

HUGH. But this I'll do: it is not fair
For me to stay, I'll take my turn.
And if your candle brightly burn [*to Ralph*]
While I'm away, e'en though I bring
The fan to win the promising [*to Nancy*]
If Nancy wishes to unsay
Her promise, she shall have her way.

[*The two men stand on either side of the girl and hold up their candles to light her and as if to pledge her. Hugh bows, then walks*

across in front of her and on out through the curtains.]

RALPH. He goeth forth upon his quest
And whether in earnest or in jest
No man can say.

[*He turns from looking after Hugh to Nancy, and gestures to her to be seated upon the settee.*]

RALPH. Will you not sit?

[*She sits down on the settee.*]

The last quadrille — he may have it.
I care not much.

NANCY. Oh, but you should!
I mean I almost think you would
If you but knew. 'Tis very meet
For you to know. Quite indiscreet
For me to tell. Oh, can't you guess?

RALPH. I only want you to say "Yes."

[*He goes to the mantelpiece and places the candlestick upon it.*]

'Tis foolish, sure, to break a lance
Just for the trifle of a dance.

[*He comes back and takes the little gilt chair, placing it in front of her and sits down.*]

Now, Nancy, give me your consent,
You must have known 'twas my intent
To ask you for my wife some day.
I never dreamed you'd say me nay,
Or even that you'd hesitate.

NANCY. You left a great deal, sir, to fate.
Don't lovers think they have to woo?

RALPH. They're fools, I'd too much else to do.
But now the time is ripe, dear Nan.

NANCY. You'd better, then, go hunt my fan.
RALPH. That's unimportant —
NANCY. Nay, not so! [*anxiously*]
Indeed, you really ought to go.
RALPH. Upon that article of dress,
Your fan, you lay too much of stress.
NANCY. Since you'll not guess, I'm forced to tell
I've promised him my heart as well
Who brings my fan.
RALPH. By Jove, I see!
But, Nancy, this is trickery.
[*He gets up hastily at the last speech and now moves toward the door. He has taken up the candlestick.*]
'Tis foolishness!
NANCY. We'll play the game
And have no one but fate to blame.
RALPH [*stopping at the door and looking greatly disturbed*].
Where do you think you could have left
The fan? Where shall I hunt? A theft
You guess it was?
NANCY. I can not say
And should not if I could — good day!
[*Ralph rushes toward the door and runs straight into Hugh, who is coming through the curtains.*]
RALPH. You've got the fan? [*Hurriedly and anxiously.*]
HUGH. One doesn't get
What he already has. Nanette,
I left you in fantastic mood —

I've come back and would fain be good.
Ralph seemed just now so keen to go
About his business — leave you so — [*nonchalantly*]
I wouldn't have him stay for me.
[*Hugh puts his candle on the mantelpiece. Ralph does not budge, but looks angrily at Hugh.*]
HUGH. Oh, very well, I quite agree
To have him witness what I tell.
[*He addresses himself always to Nancy, ignoring Ralph.*]
'Twas when you left the chair it fell [*producing the fan*]
So noiselessly you did not hear.
I picked it up because 'twas dear
To me, and I meant not to give
It back, but keep it while I live.
Then came the chance to tease you, for [*gesturing toward Ralph*]
'Tis said, all's fair in love and war.
All is not fair and honor's due,
So I give back the fan to you.
It is to you that I confess
I couldn't risk your happiness.
RALPH. To choose is now within your will,
May I not have the last quadrille?
NANCY. You may, dear Ralph, I'll speak you fair,
If Hugh will kindly seek my chair
And walk beside it home with me
To see my Grandma, probably
She'd like to-night to wish us joy.

[*She prettily extends her hand to Hugh, smiling. Ralph takes in the situation a little slowly and sullenly.*]

RALPH. I beg your pardon — I'll annoy
You no further.

[*He looks a little helplessly at the candle as he turns to go. Hugh steps forward and takes it from him. Ralph departs through the curtains. Hugh blows out the candle and places it on the mantelpiece — his own is still burning — then comes to Nancy.*]

HUGH. Are you quite
Content, sweetheart, that this is right?

NANCY. I was so very much afraid
It wouldn't end this way! A maid
Can't see a man's heart until he
Makes clear his love with honesty.

HUGH. You didn't think that I was true?

NANCY. You hadn't proved it yet, had you?
Until you did, I had to play
The game — I wanted you alway.

HUGH. But, dearest, truly will you now
Believe I'll keep my lover's vow?

NANCY. Ah, can't you see I give, dear Hugh,
My fan [*extending it to him*]
And hand [*letting her hand rest in his*]
And heart [*laying her head upon his breast*]
To you?

[*The music of the old-fashioned orchestra is heard from the hall. Curtain.*]

A MODERN MASQUE.

CHARACTERS AS THEY APPEAR.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.
JOSEPH ADDISON.
THE SPIRIT OF POETRY.
THE SPIRIT OF DRAMA.
SHAKESPEARE.
THE SPIRIT OF SPRING OR OF YOUTH.
THE SPIRIT OF WOMAN.

[SCENE: *An open green of thick young grass, surrounded to make an irregular circle by bushes, some of them in flower, sweet syringa, fringe, and others. A hill rises in the background covered with thick young grass which waves in the wind. On the hill are also bushes, hawthorns in white flower, some blooming fruit trees, and a great honey-locust still in blossom, its petals falling and making snow upon the green grass beneath. In the distance is a woodland. Joseph Addison and G. B. Shaw appear on either side of the green, stop and gaze upon each other with rather hostile and contemptuous curiosity. Addison is dressed in a very gay eighteenth century costume of green velvet with brocaded waistcoat, prodigious, powdered wig, silk stockings, and buckled shoes. Shaw wears a gray flannel shirt, soft flowing Windsor tie, Norfolk jacket,*

knickerbockers, soft slouch hat, and heavy tramping Oxfords. He carries a walking stick and is rather intrusive with his usual plentiful supply of red whiskers.]

ADDISON [*aside*].

Whom have we here in such uncouth attire?
A bearded lackey in his master's hire?
What breach of taste — no wig upon his head
But fluent hair about his mouth instead!

SHAW. Good heavens, man, don't you know better than to use an aside? They are altogether out of date. The ancient fools and factotems of the stage like Shakespeare and Addison used asides but I have changed all that. I am preacher, reformer, prophet. I have taught the public to expect life in the drama and not sentimentality and artificiality.

ADDISON [*aside*].

Astounding circumstance! Who can the fellow be
To speak of drama, yet not recognize me!

SHAW. There you go again with another aside when I have just said they are not permissible. You are as bull-headed as one of the Georges or an Englishman.

ADDISON [*advancing with courtly manners, but glaring*].

Good fellow, though your manners be uncouth,

You speak of drama, know you then the truth:
I, John Addison, before you stand,
Your purpose and your name I would demand.

SHAW. How deliciously humorous! But now you see how I do it. I say right out to your face what I think — that is the way I always treat the public, especially if I think they are too stupid to understand.

ADDISON.

The advantage of me still, my man, you claim,
I, Joseph Addison, know not your name.

SHAW. Well, it would be almost egotistical in me to expect you to. To expect a man who died a century before I was born to know me, although my whiskers are pretty familiar in most parts of London. I am George Bernard Shaw, critic, essayist, satirist, socialist, dramatist, genius. It is my business to shatter ideals and wittily block out to the world formulæ for unpleasant truths. My foster child, Arnold Bennett, has been rather usurping my place lately and I am thinking of killing him with one of my stinging satirical remarks. But I haven't altogether decided yet, for he doesn't bother me much in my particular sphere. I am still the foremost critic and dramatist of the world.

ADDISON [*politely unctuous*].

A critic and a dramatist combined I see!
Indeed 'tis fairly like the eighteenth century.

SHAW [*smiling*]. A little — with a vast improvement. You fellows of the eighteenth century had some ideas of art — I give you full credit for that. Any one of you had more knowledge of art than that idiot in craftsmanship, that gigantic blunderer, that colossal superstition, Shakespeare. Don't misunderstand me — I use the term superstition in connection with Shakespeare to mean not at all that he did not exist or that he did not write his own plays.

ADDISON [*smiling superciliously*].

> Truly of that there could not be a doubt!
> A stable boy, manners and wit without!
> Also, a man hath said what he hath said,
> Produced his products from his own poor head.

SHAW. You are altogether lucid, Joseph. I quite agree with you. [*Poetry and Drama go up the hill together and wander about slowly among the trees and bushes. They are both dressed in flowing garments of Greek style, Poetry in soft blue, Drama in old rose. Drama carries a flowering branch of hawthorn.*] Shakespeare's greatness is the superstition I refer to. Every one knows that I think my plays are infinitely better than Shakespeare's and what I think every one will have to think sooner or later. Oh, Shakespeare wrote his own plays. Bacon was too scientific and mental to produce such atrocious rot and gush. Some time ago I remarked that I wanted to dig up Shakespeare's bones and string them up to shoot at for his bad art. But now I realize that isn't enough. I

want to exterminate him completely. But he is elusive. His influence turns up in the most unexpected places. But I was told on very good authority, that of J. M. Barrie, that I would be most apt to find him in fairyland — especially at this time of the year. So I have come to fairyland — here — to hunt him down.

[*Poetry and Drama slowly wander down the hill on one side. Shakespeare and Spring emerge from behind the bushes on the other side of the green and go up the hill a little way. They are not together. Shakespeare is in the conventional Shakespearean costume of black velvet. Spring is in light green hose, and a little short coat, no shoes, honeysuckle in his hair and a long chain of wild sweet clover hanging from one shoulder down to the other side.*]

ADDISON.

We scorn allusions to the land of fairy,
we,
The social satirists of the eighteenth century,
Yet I to fairyland have come, like you,
To find out Shakespeare and to thrust him
through.

SHAW [*advancing, and the two shake hands like two conspirators*]. Good for you, Joseph! I didn't know you had so much blood in you.

[*Shakespeare has appeared quietly on one side of the green.*]

SHAKESPEARE [*aside*]. "So much blood as would clog the foot of a flea."

SHAW. I don't take any more stock in fairy-land than you do. It is a crude and at the same time an artificial society, a nationality devoid of science or ethics or social uplift and fit only for those sucking-doves of idiots, such as Willie Yeats and the other new-thought Irishmen, who are not Irishmen at all, by the way — I am the only Irishman — but just ordinary freaks that might occur in Russia or Borneo and as a matter of fact — [*the spirits of Poetry and Drama, who have been wandering about among the trees, now come quietly down to the green on the other side from Shakespeare while Shaw makes this speech.*]

POETRY. There is Bernard Shaw talking as usual. [*To Drama.*]

SHAW [*continuing*]. — and as a matter of fact have occurred in France and Germany and England at intervals throughout the history of the world, as in the case of Shakespeare and Shelley —

POETRY [*coming forward*]. Shelley? What have you to say of Shelley?

SHAW. Only that he was insane and an anarchist. His was a mind gone wrong. I sometimes think if he had lived in my day I might have converted him and made something out of him, that is to say, made a socialist out of him. But it would be almost egotistical in me to expect to have an influence over a man who died before I was born — approximately. But, my dear madam, who are you? I think I never met you.

POETRY. You are quite right. You do not

know me and I think you will never know me. I am the spirit of Poetry.

SHAW. Quite so. I permit myself to be blind to the unessentials. You are a creature of no particular value in the ethical or scientific or social economy.

ADDISON.

> Indeed, my friend, you do egregious wrong,
> Oh, do not scorn, but praise immortal song!
> I bow before the bright celestial Muse,
> May she with light my poor attempts infuse!
> May she with inspiration touch my rhyme,
> And all my lines march to her feet sublime!

[*Spring has been wandering about on the hillside, playing with flowers and weaving chains of them, and now comes down to the green.*]

POETRY. It all depends upon thy sincerity, dear worshiper. One doubts a little of thee. My poets no longer harass their souls for the sake of that corset called rhyme. There was Walt Whitman, for instance, who did not know rhyme from a turkey buzzard — yet — [*reverently*] — yet one touches the memory of his soul as one would touch a wind-flower.

SPRING. A wind-flower? One of my flowers? You were talking of one of my flowers, Poetry?

POETRY. Yes, Spring, one of your flowers and one of your people. [*To Shaw and Addison.*] This little person is the spirit of Spring or of Youth, one of my dear friends.

SHAW. It would be almost egotistical in me to expect to remember Youth since I am so essentially middle-aged, yet I can readily see that youth may exist in fairyland. But who is this other gentleman? He looks rather attractive in spite of his silly clothing. Is he — to put it in the English sense — one of your followers? [*To Poetry.*]

POETRY. I have told you that I am Poetry. This is another friend of mine. He sometimes goes about by himself but he is always more splendid when I am with him. We are always together in the house of Shakespeare or of Maeterlinck or of Rostand. He is the spirit of Drama.

SHAW [*with effusion, making for Drama, who stands back from him coldly.*] Ah, my dear fellow, I am your friend and patron, the best exponent of you on the stage to-day.

DRAMA [*with dignity*]. I do not know you.

SHAW. Why, my dear boy, I am G. B. Shaw, I am your patron saint!

DRAMA. You might be the devil by the look of you. Your make-up would do for Mephistopheles in "Faust," yet — oh, pshaw, I [*smiling*] do not know you. I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance.

SHAW. But, my dear fellow, don't you remember? I criticized plays for years and now I write them.

DRAMA. That proves you are no dramatist. A budding genius writes plays first and criticizes them afterwards.

SHAW. Geniuses don't bud nowadays. They

are scientifically developed by vegetarian nourishment — starting with the kindergarten, or, I may say, with pre-natal influence.

DRAMA [*puzzled*]. He doesn't sound like Sophocles or Molière or even Hauptmann or D'Annunzio or Maeterlinck.

POETRY. Mr. Shaw is British, you know.

DRAMA. But there was my Shakespeare — he was British.

POETRY. The superman of British art.

SHAW [*staggering back*]. Superman! Good heavens, merciful powers! They apply my own dear designation to that driveling idiot!

[*Drama and Poetry support him.*]

SHAKESPEARE. "That was the most unkindest cut of all."

SHAW. Thanks, I'm all right. Any one who in knee breeches and gray flannel shirt has trundled his art through the streets of London as I have done has learned to stand on his own two legs. But, what puzzles me, Drama, is what you are doing in fairyland?

SPRING [*dancing down from behind and around among them on the green*].

> All roads go to fairyland,
> Every wise man's son doth know,
> Joy and Beauty hand-in-hand
> Lead the way to fairyland,
> Dancing, singing as they go.

[*He dances down the center among them, then vanishes into the background.*]

DRAMA. I fear, Mr. Shaw, you are merely a phase of the moment. You do not realize that

I am cosmopolitan, that I am of time and of eternity. I have abodes everywhere — even a castle in Spain — like many another poor soul. One of my chiefest estates is in fairyland, and I am never quite happy unless I carry a spray from fairyland with me. We call that spray Fantasy.

POETRY. The question is, what are *you* doing in fairyland, Mr. Shaw? It is a very strange place for you to be in and very strange that here in fairyland you should come for the first time face to face with the spirit of Drama. Though you are not the first one who has had to come to dreamland to meet him.

SHAW. Why, I will be perfectly frank with you. I was never one to hide my talents or my opinions under a bushel. I am after Shakespeare.

DRAMA. You are after Shakespeare — a long way after.

SHAW. He was so bungling a fool in his art, his craftsmanship was so imperfect, he didn't know what construction meant in the drama, and I am sick of his false pretensions and position and all the adulation paid him, so I am going to exterminate him. I and my old friend here, Joseph. Joseph, where are you?

[*Addison has gone to sleep on a log, and the spirit of Woman has entered unobserved during Shaw's speech.*]

WOMAN. You mean Joseph Kipling, I suppose. That unfortunate fellow who was once Rudyard Kipling, the gifted boy, the very darling of the gods. But his taste for cynicism and sensationalism have ruined him. He has degen-

erated into a common and unpleasant man-scold in the ugliest of ill-fitting clothing and the most unsanitary of wire-haired mustaches. So we call him no longer Rudyard but Joseph — it seems to suit him better.

SHAW. No, I don't mean Kipling. He has all he can do fixing women in their right place and earning enough money for keeping a wife to bear him children. He is busy with the female of the species. I mean Addison. Where are you, Joseph? You were here a moment ago.

ADDISON [*who has been sitting asleep on the log, now jumps to his feet, winking fast to get awake.*]

> A bloody business now we have on hand,
> Drenching with gore the sod of fairyland!
> Ladies, I pray you, flee from hence afar,
> Where anguished groans may not your
> spirits jar!

WOMAN [*running forward*]. Oh, do not shed blood, I beseech you!

POETRY. Oh, do no harm to Shakespeare, I entreat you!

SHAW [*patronizingly*]. Now, my dears, don't make an unpleasant scene. We are quite determined to kill him. [*To Woman.*] You are the spirit of Woman, I perceive, even though you are in different clothing from that I usually dress you in, I know you too well to be fooled by mere outward trappings. Now, run away, dears, like good women, and weep privately in some out-of-the-way place where your sobs will not be heard. We dislike feminine wailing. And we have

man's business to attend to. Joseph, where are you? Where do you suppose Shakespeare is?

WOMAN. Oh, where is he that we warn him?

POETRY. Oh, where is he that we may protect him?

SHAKESPEARE [*advancing with a courtly bow to Poetry*]. I am here, dear madonna [*bowing in the same courtly way to Shaw*]. I am here, good hangman. I am among you as the artist is always among you. I am at the mercy of the dilettante [*bowing to Addison*] and of the mediocre [*bowing to Shaw*] as the genius is always at their mercy. And I am defenseless as the artist is always defenseless.

[*Poetry and Woman quickly hurry to Shakespeare and stand in front of him, protectingly.*]

POETRY [*to Shakespeare*]. They dare not touch you, my lord.

SHAKESPEARE. They dare touch anything, dear madonna. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Nothing in this world is safe from the dilettante and the mediocre and, thou wilt add, from the vulgar and the over-zealous neophyte. With greasy thumb they rub the bloom from the blue grape, and with sickening breath they wither the blue violet. They go about the earth like deadly flies destroying loveliness. There is nothing left to the lover of beauty but his own soul and the blue of heaven.

SHAW. Talking sentimental gush, as usual. Come, Joseph, we must do for him. Ladies, please stand aside.

[*Addison unsheathes his sword and Shaw brandishes his walking stick. Woman and Poetry gather closer round Shakespeare and shield him.*]

POETRY. Oh, my lord, will you not flee?

WOMAN [*to Addison and Shaw*]. You dare not touch him till you have first made way with me.

SHAW. Well, you may have observed that we are rather doing that.

ADDISON [*grandiosely*].

Give over dreams and feminine inanity,
Make way for men and true poetic sanity!

DRAMA. I am cosmopolitan, impartial, unprejudiced, but when a conflict comes I must stand upon the right side. I beg you not to be too foolishly militant, rude, ungenerous, and — most of all — short-sighted, gentlemen, against a genius so beautiful, so wonderful. You will see the day when you will rue it.

SHAW. Pooh, pooh, the fight is on. [*Holding up his walking stick.*] This is my strong weapon, satire. It is stronger than Excalibur or the sword of Siegfried — strong, hard, and material. With it I fight and slay all silly prettiness, untruths, and dreams.

WOMAN. Ah, who are you, to know what now is truth?

[*Shaw makes a lunge, followed by Addison. Poetry and Woman with Drama between them and a little in front of them, gather together, stand silently before Shakespeare and*

begin to wave filmy veils toward Shaw and Addison. The latter halt, step back, and stand as if transfixed.]

SHAW [*low and mumbling*]. What are they doing, Joseph? Are they doing the same thing to you? I feel sleepy. They are doing something.

ADDISON. They do what they have done these hundred years,
An incantation worthy your worst fears.

SHAW. Incantation? Nonsense. I don't believe in incantations. But they are doing something. Have they done this to you for a hundred years? I feel — it would be almost egotistical in me — to remember — a hundred years.

ADDISON.

Time and oblivion are the subtle wrong
These beings use upon my plays and song.
The venom worketh with the slow sad hour,
Against their poisonous charms we have no power.

SHAW. Have they done it to you for a hundred years, Joseph? No — no wonder your brain is such a dusty old miller. But I think — they — will not do it to me for so long. I — I am too sane — too brilliant — too — I shall have to use my stick to support myself with. I am so ridiculously sleepy.

[*Shakespeare stands quietly behind them, watching. Spring, who has been in the background all the while, is now waving a wreath of flowers.*]

POETRY.

We wave you the spell of the years,
Forgetfulness cruel and sure,
We wave it in sorrow and tears
To souls unfit to endure.
Forgetfulness subtle and sure
Is our weapon that blights you and sears,
The little and mean and impure
Are lost in the spell of the years.

[*Addison and Shaw drop their weapons and are as if hypnotized.*]

SHAW. Jo, Josie, this is no place for us. We'd better go back to London and the camp of the socialists. I'd like a plate of nice boiled rice or vegetable marrow or some other good vegetarian dish to give me strength. These people have an atmosphere that doesn't agree with my health.

ADDISON.

They have a power known not to you
nor me,
'Tis called the gift of immortality.

[*They turn and slowly depart as if nearly asleep, Shaw's arm around Addison's shoulder, Addison supporting Shaw.*]

DRAMA. Farewell to you who are ephemeral.

WOMAN. Though you two gentlemen may reside in London for a season, you must know that you are not bound eternally for the shores of Thames, but very eternally for the shores of Lethe.

POETRY.

The earth-soul of the good and the gay
Recks naught of the new nor the old,
But proffers his garlands of bay
To the heart and the genius of gold.

[*Addison and Shaw are gone and the others turn now to Shakespeare.*]

WOMAN. You are saved, my beloved lover.

DRAMA. You are saved once again, my beloved dramatist.

POETRY. You are saved, my lord and beloved poet.

SPRING. You are saved, my beloved big friend. But weren't you awfully worried and frightened? I was. I didn't know what they might do to you. Didn't you want to fight them, too? I hoped you would fight them.

SHAKESPEARE [*smiling*]. The lusty blood in springtime hopes ever for a pretty fight. But thou shouldst read thy Bible, sweet youth. It giveth much direction and much consolation. It saith, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." And moreover, it counsels me and thee to "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers."

SPRING. Oh, but I did want you to fight even if it was two to one and they had such fearsome weapons, and you none at all.

SHAKESPEARE. The world hath fearsome weapons ever and it is ever two against one when a genius hath the temerity to pit himself against the world. The genius must die, yet will he live. And he who is scorned by the many to-day will be worshiped by the many to-morrow.

WOMAN. I must leave you now. I must go back to the world. I am needed.

SPRING. Don't you ever stop to play and have some fun? Don't you ever have any fun, Woman?

WOMAN. Oh, yes, I stop to play and have fun, though I didn't while I was Victorian. And, what is pleasantest, I am learning to get fun out of all sorts of work. I must go back to the world now. I am very much needed there. I have to work for suffrage in New York.

DRAMA. I, too, must go. They are in need of me on Broadway as a naked man is in need of a shirt. I may be able soon to inspire some noble-hearted youth to fight for me against their astute and self-satisfied grossness.

POETRY. I, too, must go. I am needed more than any of you. I am needed to make your work sweeter and more effective. People think I belong exclusively to fairyland, but I am in everything and I am needed everywhere, though they do not know it, poor souls, and few of them ever see me.

[*They start away slowly, Woman first, then Drama, and last Poetry.*]

POETRY [*turning back*]. When our beloved has need of us, we come. For, though opinion is fleeting, art is long — long and beautiful, tenacious and dominant, as hope is and as beauty itself is.

SHAKESPEARE. Auf wiedersehen.

POETRY. To the world, where we are needed.

[*They go, leaving Shakespeare and Spring waving them good-by.*]

SPRING. Do you talk German, Shakespeare?

SHAKESPEARE. I speak in many languages, to many tongues have been translated. Thou knowest the German folk have pictured me most graciously. They understand me as well, nay sometimes better, than have mine own people. Yet I do use *auf wiedersehen* now only because there is in English no expression for so brief a parting.

SPRING.

You meet your people here and there,
Oh, here and there,
Poetry, Drama, Woman fair,
Yes, Woman fair,

Philosophy and Truth and Art,
Oh, Truth and Art,
Auf wiedersehen, you only part
To meet again.

SHAKESPEARE. But thou, my little Youth and spirit of Spring,
Art with me ever as the blue of heaven,
For artists keep their hearts forever young,
And poets keep their love of little things,
Of lambs and brooks and robins in the grass,
Of tiny new-born leaves all fair and frail,
Of little hands and chuckling baby laughs,
Of little lost white clouds athwart the blue,
Of smallest song of very smallest bird,
And softest wind among the little leaves,
Of wind-flowers frail and wee blue violets,
In little dells of proper fairy size,
Of all the dearest things in this dear world.

SPRING.

But so many poor people forget
The spirit of joy and of spring,
And still are despondent and fret
When redbirds and brown thrashers sing.

SHAKESPEARE. When weakness which is oft a heavier weight
Than conscious sin upon the soul of man,
When selfishness and lethargy and lack
Of generous attitude towards others' weal,
When hardened middle-age and pedant self
And all the concrete stubborn cruelties
That come not from hot blood but cold experience,
Turning life's currents into frozen streams,
When most these hard unprofitable things
Do weigh upon my spirit and do sear
The joy of life within, then most I think
Of thee and all thy fair young loveliness.
" When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,"
I lift mine eyes unto the blue of heaven
In silent gratitude for spring, for youth.
When coldness in the winter of the year
Or hardness in the winter of the soul
Do vex me most, then is it time for thee.

SPRING.

Sing a song of bluebirds,
Spring is coming by,
Sing a song of robins,
Blue is in the sky,

Sing a song of blossoms,
Fragrance in the air,
Sing a song of fairyland,
Joyance everywhere.

SHAKESPEARE. Therefore, since thou art still my little friend,
Little brother and page, it seemeth me,
Attendant still upon us poets ever,
Belonging to us down through all the years,
I give thee now, our very dearest treasure,
Spirit of Spring, oh, joyous spirit of Youth,
I give thee to the world, and so, farewell.

[*Shakespeare presents Youth to the world or the audience and then silently withdraws into the background of shrubbery at the other side of the green from where the other spirits have gone — on the same side from which he came. Youth extends his arms to the world and sings:*]

YOUTH OR SPRING.

Violets growing few,
Cometh the rose,
Daylight is going by,
Soon will the twilight sky
Half-moon disclose
Still in the fairest blue
Over the dreaming dew.
Beauty forever nigh,
I come to you!

[*He comes out among them.*]

THE FUTURISTS.

(AN EARLY WOMAN'S CLUB MEETING.)

MRS. JAMES WHITE, *hostess, nouveau riche, but somewhat timid.*
MRS. J. M. SMITH, *if Catholic would have been a Mother Superior, as Presbyterian is president of the Ladies' Aid Society.*
MISS HOPE WRIGHT, *the ultra modern scientist of the '80's.*
MRS. WESTON-JONES, *grass widow, who paints on china and recites.*
MISS FLORA MAY ROGERS, *the leader who illuminates conventional progress.*
MRS. SCRUBBS, D. A. R.— *decayed aristocracy rising.*
MISS BEATON, *who sings.*
MRS. CLARENCE MELLIMORE, *æsthete.*

With humble apologies to everybody. The D. A. R. lady did not exist in the early eighties, but she is too delightful to be omitted from such a gathering as this. Please let her charm, then, excuse her inadvertence.

[*Curtains open upon Mrs. White's 1882 parlor. The room has a low mantelpiece with a large mirror over it at the center of the back. In this mirror Mrs. Weston-Jones is reflected to the real audience when she recites. The*

furniture is the inartistic stuff of that inartistic Victorian period. There is a bass-rocker, if possible, several screens covered with Japanese fans, Japanese paper umbrellas above the pictures, "throws" everywhere, ribbons tied in great bows to chairs and vases, a gilded rolling pin hanging from the wall, a large shovel gilded and with a snow scene covered with diamond dust painted on it, ugly bric-a-brac, furniture upholstered in rep and haircloth. The room is cluttered and disconcerting. When the ladies are seated, they should form a semi-circle, facing the audience, with Miss Rogers in the center. They should be placed: Miss Wright, Miss Beaton, Mrs. Scrubbs, Miss Rogers, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Mellimore, Mrs. White, Mrs. Weston-Jones. Miss Rogers should be provided after they are seated, with a glass of water on a little stand. Mrs. White enters with a broad piece of ribbon which she ties in a big bow to the handle of a gilded shovel standing in the corner. She then goes to the table and regards the books, novels by Black, Miss Braddon, and the Duchess. She goes out and brings in "Lucile" and "Aurora Leigh," which she places in conspicuous positions on the table. As she does so the bell rings and Mrs. Smith and Miss Wright enter. Greetings.]

WRIGHT. Look here, Mrs. White, I don't want you to insult Mrs. Smith by thinking we came together. We didn't. We just happened to meet at your door. She wouldn't be seen

on the street with me. Of course she couldn't tell you, so I thought I ought to. You see, I'm an agnostic.

[*The other two ladies look shocked and deprecating.*]

WHITE. Oh, Miss Wright, you oughtn't to tell such things on yourself. Nobody would know if you didn't tell.

WRIGHT. But I want 'em to know. I read Darwin and Herbert Spencer and Huxley. I've read the "Origin of Species" and I'm in "Synthetic Philosophy" now. I believe in evolution. Yes, I do, I believe in evolution.

SMITH. Our minister says that the theory of evolution and the doctrine of divine inspiration are not wholly incompatible when you understand them clearly — as he does — and approach them in a spirit of reverence and devout seeking after truth. He preaches beautiful sermons on science and religion. He gives enlightening five-minute talks at the opening exercises of our Ladies' Aid Society every Thursday afternoon.

WRIGHT. I s'pose he can give Herbert Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" in a nut-shell in five minutes.

SMITH [*glaring and firm*]. Yes, *he can.* Our Ladies' Aid Society is so active and accomplishes so much work. I don't see why Miss Flora May Rogers didn't invite all the members this afternoon to join the new organization.

WHITE. Well, it's Presbyterian.

SMITH. I can't see that *that* is any objection. [*Severely.*]

WHITE. Oh, no, of course, no objection,

only all the Methodist ladies and all the Baptist ladies and all the Episcopal ladies and all the U. P. ladies and all the Quaker ladies and even some of the Catholic ladies — so many, you see.

SMITH [*stiffly*]. I shouldn't expect her to ask in all the riff-raff, but almost all the important ladies in town are Presbyterian.

[*Door bell has rung during her speech. Enter Mrs. Weston-Jones.*]

W.-J. So glad to be able to come, Mrs. White.

WHITE. Oh, it isn't my — my —

W.-J. That doesn't make the *slightest* difference to me. I hope I should recognize my social duty and discharge it in paying my compliments to the hostess of the house if I were invited by some totally ulterior person to a hotel or palace or a nunnery.

WRIGHT. I guess you'd stop for formalities with the queen bee if you got caught in a bee's nest.

W.-J. Oh, you *naughty* Hope Wright, what brings you here?

WRIGHT. I'm sure I don't know, but probably about the same thing that brings the rest.

W.-J. Pardon me but I thought there was a particular reason for inviting each one of the ladies. I imagined that each one had some especial gift that she could offer as her share of the common fund of pleasure.

WRIGHT. You mean I haven't any parlor tricks.

W.-J. I would never put it so baldly, dear. Far be it from me ever to draw invidious comparisons. I am so awfully modest about my own

little talents, yet I feel that it would be wrong to deny my friends any little pleasure I can afford them. So when I am very much urged I *do* consent to recite occasionally.

[*White and Smith have wandered off to the end of the stage.*]

WRIGHT. Well, you've made your *raison d'être* clear. Why do you suppose Flora May asked Mrs. J. W. Smith to come?

W.-J. Tut, tut, how disrespectful! To speak of our distinguished guide in the fields of artistic progress and human thought without the prefix of Miss! She would *have* to have Mrs. S. because Mrs. S. is a leading light in religious culture. Miss Rogers desires to bring together leading ladies in various branches.

[*Mrs. Smith is heard to say.*]

SMITH. I like a good red in a carpet. A red and green carpet brightens a room.

WHITE. I love wood shades. And it's so nice to feel as if you was treading on autumn leaves.

SMITH. Well, brown *wears* well.

WRIGHT. When she's got 'em, she'll have a nice collection of missing links. Now why on earth did she invite Jim Smith's wife?

W.-J. *Shush!* The house, my dear. It can be used so beautifully for entertainments. We can't have the house without having her.

WRIGHT. Can't have the nut without the worm.

W.-J. [*raising her voice and advancing towards Mrs. White*]. I was just saying, dear Mrs. White, what a perfectly beautiful house you

have. It is so artistic. I have never seen so much taste displayed. *So* decorative. Do you do it all yourself? *Wonderfully* æsthetic. I try to do a *little* myself. I am so fond of Japanese effects. I have a perfectly lovely *bird* — you would adore it — about three feet high, with beautiful thin legs, yellow legs — a stork or heron or something — with long neck and long bill, yellow legs, you know, and white body. It's made of cotton batting and the legs are tissue paper. You've no idea how charming it looks standing by a bamboo picture frame easel in a corner of the parlor with two Japanese fans, crossed, tacked to the wall above. [*Door-bell rings. Enter Miss Rogers, Mrs. Scrubbs, Miss Beaton. Salutations.*]

ROGERS. Isn't it delightful that we are all so prompt?

WRIGHT. It's just because it's new. When the novelty wears off the same inevitable ladies will be late to club meetings as they have been to parties and missionary meetings.

ROGERS [*smiling*]. I grant the habit is strong.

WRIGHT. It isn't habit — it's pose.

ROGERS. Still I venture to believe that this is a band of thinking, intelligent, responsible women who desire —

WRIGHT. You seem to have extracted all the salt from the sea.

ROGERS. — a band of thinking, intelligent, responsible women [*always pronounces it wimin*] who desire to develop themselves, to cultivate and foster and promote all their talents and the striving after the ideals they feel to be in their

own natures, all the best and noblest and highest that in them lies, both for the ulterior benefit of themselves as individuals, and each and every one of them as co-workers, and even more deeply and earnestly for the benefit of those with whom they in any way come into contact, for the benefit of the neighborhood in which they live, the community they would serve, their church, city, state, country, nation.

[*The ladies all gaze at her in rapt admiration.*]

WRIGHT. Oh, if you think it's going to do all that. I believe in evolution, myself. It seems to me things go rather slow.

ROGERS. Slow, yes! We can not expect a change in the twinkling of an eye, but slowly, gradually, beautifully. And from small beginnings — oh, as it were from *insignificant* beginnings. We are but a grain of mustard seed. [*She says this with unction, giving the impression that she, large and portly, is the mustard seed.*]

WHITE [*to Mrs. Smith*]. She makes you feel your responsibility so.

SMITH [*with her pietistic profundity*]. The responsibility laid upon us is great — we should always feel it as such.

ROGERS [*brightening*]. It seemed fitting that we should begin our afternoon with a little diversion — diversion of a beautiful and uplifting character — and therefore some of our friends have been kind enough to consent to add to the pleasure of the occasion. Miss Beaton has succumbed to our urging and will sing.

[*Miss Beaton looks scared and flustered.*]

SCRUBBS. Is everybody here? Don't you think we ought to wait till everybody's here?

ROGERS. I think everybody is here except Mrs. Mellimore and perhaps it would be an excellent precedent both for ourselves and for all future ladies' clubs to open our exercises promptly. [*Very ponderously and then smiling.*] Miss Beaton, will you?

[*Miss Beaton goes to the piano. They all seat themselves in politely attentive attitudes. She sings in a high, thin, quavering voice "Sweet Violets." While she is singing the doorbell rings loudly. Mrs. Mellimore wafts herself in. General disturbance. The hostess rises to get Mrs. Mellimore a chair. Glances among the ladies. Miss Beaton finishes "Sweet Violets." Applause.*]

W.-J. Oh, Miss Beaton, that was so charming! What a divine gift is the lyric expression of song. How poor and weak and ineffectual does elocution seem beside it. I often say when people are kind enough to compliment me upon my own little talent, oh, if I could only *choose!* [*She shakes her head as words fail to express the fulness of her meaning and emotion.*]

SCRUBBS [*in a low tone, pugnaciously consolatory*]. We enjoyed it so much, Miss Beaton. Your singing was beautiful. Too bad to have it ruined by people coming in late. I was afraid it would be that way. I told Miss Rogers so. Such a racket!

WRIGHT. You're a daisy, Miss Beaton. The song was a daisy.

MELLIMORE [*floating up — offering her hand languidly*]. Daisy? Wasn't it about violets? [*To Miss Beaton.*] So good of you to sing. Violets are sweet — but oh, lilies or sunflowers! They are too utterly — too utterly — Couldn't you, dear, find a song about a lily or a sunflower? And then design a gown like the flower — orange silk, for instance, like the sunflower — with perhaps green sleeves to represent the leaves, and then you would carry one — oh, just one very large sunflower — to have it all completely consistent and æsthetic. Ah, it would be too utterly adorable!

ROGERS. Now that we are all here and have listened with so much appreciation to Miss Beaton's music, shall we proceed to business and leave the rest of the entertainment till the end of the meeting, or shall we have it now?

W.-J. [*sweetly apologetic and retiring*]. Oh, I shall be so glad to omit it altogether if the ladies think they haven't time.

WRIGHT. Let's put the entertainment off for the dessert and get to the business now.

SCRUBBS. My experience in the D. A. R. is that if you get to business you never get back. So have the entertainment now and make sure of it.

WHITE. Ain't there time for both? I'm sure you don't have to hurry off.

ROGERS. Very well, then, we will proceed with the entertainment. Mrs. Weston-Jones, will you?

W.-J. Oh, I feel absolutely *wicked* to take your valuable time. And I feel so small and fu-

tile and inadequate after the *beautiful* singing. [*Then in her most professional voice.*] I have selected for my recitation this afternoon a little thing with which you are all familiar, a simple little story told in verse — simple yet touching and with the human appeal that must speak with no uncertain accent to the hearts of all. And though a simple story, familiar to many of us, yet never can it lose its charm. Ladies, I will recite the little poem, "Curfew Must Not Ring To-night."

[*She recites it preferably with her back to the audience and her own audience in a semi-circle in front of her and facing the real audience. Mrs. White sniffles audibly and at the end of the recitation Mrs. White and Mrs. Scrubbs are dissolved in tears. Much applause — so much that Miss Rogers is afraid there is going to be an encore. She rises and stems the current.*]

ROGERS [*impressively — always impressively*]. While we all understand that Mrs. Weston-Jones has wonderful elocutionary talent, I am sure that we must feel that the exhibit she has just made of it is of a particularly high order. For myself, I can not help realizing deeply that this is due to the importance, the solemnity, the spiritual significance of the occasion. [*More lightly.*] And now that we have enjoyed the beautiful entertainment these two ladies have provided so generously —

WRIGHT. Got over the frills.

MELLIMORE. Oh, Mrs. Weston-Jones, truly you are — you are so intense!

ROGERS. We will now proceed to the business of the afternoon which as you know is the organization of ourselves into the nucleus of a society. It may be well before proceeding further, ladies, to review the situation, to explain some truths, tendencies, and indications that have been so deeply impressing themselves upon some of us. We are now at the parting of the ways, we are in the cumulative initiation of a movement, we are pioneers in new fields of labor, the richness of which are as yet unexplored and undreamed of. A great spiritual breath has been passing over the country, through the civilized world, one might almost say, and awakening the women — yes, ladies, I repeat, the women [*pronounces it always very carefully wimin*] of the land. They are no longer content to be household drudges or the futile, vain, foolish playthings of the lords in houses that are mere habitations — no, they are seeking after the arts, they are desirous of cultivating themselves, they would themselves be and they would fill their houses with manifestations of beauty and goodness. Beauty, ladies, the decorative female — decorative actively and passively, subjectly and objectively — decorative as to herself and as to her home and everything she touches — the decorative female is no longer a dream of Tennyson and Ruskin, but she is an accomplished fact.

WRIGHT [*in a loud whisper to Mrs. Scrubbs*]. Well, I've heard of accomplished musicians but I never heard — but, yes, she's right — the decorative female *is* an accomplished fact.

ROGERS. We ladies of the Victorian era can

not tell what we owe to Tennyson and Ruskin. They are the Castor and Pollux of Victorian Rome, as it were, they are the Moses and Aaron of Victorian womanhood —

WRIGHT [*interrupting*]. Do you know, Miss Rogers, I don't think so much of those two. I'd call them — well, the ladies-maid and housemaid of the Victorian ménage.

ROGERS. My dear, it will be long before Ruskin's influence wanes, if ever. His doctrines of femininity and of the home will be inculcated in young women of the future generation and of future generations.

WRIGHT. I bet they'll kick over the traces, too. Just wait till there is a reaction against Papa Ruskin and his cap and apron strings. He's the Anglican progenitor of feminine indirect influence.

ROGERS. My dear, I understand he's used now as a text-book in the colleges for young ladies.

WRIGHT. Oh, what retribution!

SMITH. Colleges for young women — humph!

WRIGHT. Don't you believe in them, Mrs. Smith? It's what we are all coming to.

SMITH. *Believe* in them? Believe in having my little Janie's mind contaminated by philosophy and higher mathematics? Some day I hope she may become a mother!

WRIGHT. I can't see any objection.

MELLIMORE. If they would only teach culture in women's colleges. But I understand they teach a dreadful thing called political economy.

WRIGHT. It isn't so dreadful. It's just a sort of log-house in the clearing, Mrs. Mellimore.

SCRUBBS. I would rather see my daughter in a nunnery than let her go to college. I shall send her to Europe to study music and German.

SMITH. Women are aping men when they want to go to college. Anything but the strong-minded, masculine woman. [*She being extremely masculine and strong-minded.*]

WRIGHT [*suggestively*]. Well, like the poor, she has always been with us. Oh, I grant you there will be a period when colleges will turn women into mental processes, but that will pass in the course of a few hundred years perhaps and women will learn to take education with a grain of salt, that is humor — humor is the mental salt of life — and with imagination, which is the wine of life.

ROGERS. Higher education for women is too radical a step, a foolish and mistaken step towards anarchy — anarchy of the home — I may be old-fashioned —

[*Cries of "Oh, no, indeed, you are not," etc., from all the ladies.*]

ROGERS. — too old-fashioned but I can not help regarding it so.

W.-J. Oh, you are *too* broad-minded and moderate, Miss Rogers!

ROGERS. As I was about to say, this wonderful movement, this awakening, this spiritual breath that is sweeping over the land, this psychic atmosphere that we are conscious or unconscious of, has come to its fruition, of expansion, of ac-

tive development, and ladies everywhere are forming themselves into societies. Already these receptive followers of Ruskin are absorbed in household decoration. They take the simplest things and transform them into objects of adornment.

WRIGHT. Yes, it's the day when you can't call a spade a spade but a parlor ornament.

ROGERS. Miss Wright, if you will kindly desist from interruption there will be abundant time for discussion later. This room is an example of what we all see in each other's homes, of the possibilities in the simplest articles when applied to decoration. But we have been groping along as individuals, now we come to the time for banding ourselves together, to work in accord, in unison, for the best good of each other and of the many, to develop our tastes, to foster the highest ideals, to nurture taste and culture and mental activity that is becoming in a woman — for that purpose, we, a little group of earnest women, are gathered together.

[*The ladies are much impressed, almost carried away. They nod and whisper to each other their deep approval.*]

MELLIMORE. You have so eloquently expressed what we all feel. Only I wish you might have added to the prophets of culture and poetry the name of Mr. Oscar Wilde. I feel that the mosaic mantle of Ruskin has fallen upon his shoulders and with a single sunflower in his hand, he will lead us on to victory.

W.-J. You have indeed expressed our thoughts more nobly than we could have expressed

them. It is difficult after such a flight of — such a flight of *real oratory* to proceed to such a humdrum thing as business.

WRIGHT. If I may be allowed to open my head again, may I ask what all are we up to? Just what is the object? I like to have things definite. You know I'm scientific.

ROGERS. We are going to organize.

WRIGHT. Organize what?

ROGERS. Ourselves.

WRIGHT. What for?

SCRUBBS. To study history.

W.-J. For private theatricals — Howells' farces, perhaps.

BEATON. A ladies' musical club.

SMITH. To spread an interest in missions.

WHITE. China painting and wood carving.

MELLIMORE. Culture — the analysis of the intense.

WRIGHT. Seems a little vague yet. Maybe I'll make out later.

SMITH. We shall have a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and chairmen of various committees.

WRIGHT. Isn't that nice — then we can all be officers before the members are asked to join. That's the way to get up a club, fix it up to suit yourselves and then invite in the herd to do the work and pay expenses.

MELLIMORE. Ah, Miss Wright, how delightful ironical you are!

SMITH. We ought to have organization. I believe in thorough organization. Complete, strong organization is like the foundation of a

building. We must not build on sand. And we must be splendidly officered.

WRIGHT. With ourselves to choose from we couldn't help that.

MELLIMORE. Ah, Miss Wright, how excruciatingly ironical you are!

SMITH. We must first choose officers.

SCRUBBS. Oh, I think we ought to have a constitution first. That is the first thing men always do.

SMITH. We can't have a constitution until we have officers.

SCRUBBS. How in the world can you have officers till you have a constitution that tells you what officers to have? I am sure the constitution of the United States was the first thing the Pilgrim Fathers — I mean the founders — did. General Washington and Andrew Jackson and the rest — why of course they sat right down and framed the constitution. Any lady in the D. A. R. will tell you that.

SMITH. Perhaps the ladies of the D. A. R. have had more experience than the ladies of the Ladies' Aid Society or the ladies of the Ladies' Home Missionary Society or the Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society or the Ladies' Auxiliary for Church Extension or the Ladies' Freedman's Aid or the Bible Society or the Ladies' Branch for the Amelioration of the Orphans and Half Orphans of Deceased Missionaries or the Ladies' Extension of the Society for the Support of Superannuated Ministers. [*Draws a long breath.*] *I* have held office in all of these worthy organizations. I may say I have a *little* experience. I

am willing to leave it to the ladies present whether my opinion and advice are valuable or not.

W.-J. If you will permit a very humble layman to express a very humble opinion may I say that it seems hardly proper, hardly delicate and feminine for ladies to be too deeply interested in such masculine affairs as a constitution and officers. It seems to me that Lord Tennyson and Mr. Ruskin would hardly counsel and direct the feminine mind to such extremes.

MELLIMORE. I feel quite subtly and responsively sure that the æsthetic school would not consider a constitution beautiful. What, oh, what is there in a constitution that is graceful, poetic, or intense?

WRIGHT. A constitution is not at all evolutionary.

ROGERS. But, ladies, we must have a constitution. All the newest organizations of ladies' societies have them.

SMITH. A constitution is like a brake on the slippery wheels of radicalism.

WRIGHT. And the brake gets rusty.

W.-J. Oh, dear, you make it sound like woman's rights.

WRIGHT. Well, I don't see why it shouldn't. I believe in woman's rights.

W.-J. Oh, Hope!

[*The ladies are all scandalized. Chorus of "Oh, Miss Wright."*]

WRIGHT. Yes, I do. I believe in woman's rights, and what is more, I'd just like to vote myself. [*Chorus of "ohs."*] I'd like to do

things like a human being and not like an undeveloped, embryonic *thing*. And I'd like to work and earn my own living and not be doled out a five-dollar bill at a time from some harem-keeping father or husband or brother. I'd like to earn wages like a man and get the same pay for the same work.

W.-J. Oh, my dear Hope, for a young lady to work for her living, how unlady-like!

MELLIMORE. One can speak of the sordid thing called money only with the utmost disinclination and aversion, but it seems especially shocking to refer to it in connection with the delicate poetry of femininity.

ROGERS. For a young lady of respectable parentage to labor outside her own home is pernicious to all the standards of civilization.

SMITH. It is a denial of holy law.

WRIGHT. All the same it's coming.

MELLIMORE. Ah, how infinitely more sublime it would be if we would endeavor to reach a higher plane of artistic appreciation. If we would *exist* instead of working. If we would but *breathe* instead of eating. To achieve perfection of line — of just one straight line — to produce poetry in the hang of a skirt, to occasion music in the bend of an elbow, to realize art in the contour of a nose, to blend one's soul with the soul of a sunflower!

SCRUBBS. I don't know that I catch your meaning but I think if a girl works she'll lose her femininity.

WRIGHT. Maybe she'd just as well lose a little of it and her bustle, too.

ROGERS. Ladies, I *hope* you will not repeat this conversation. While we must grant to each and every one the privilege of individual opinion, it would be disastrous to have the extremely peculiar views of one member become known and perhaps attached by an inconsiderate public to *all* of us. As the leaders of the thought of the day we can not afford to be considered peculiar, strong-minded, or possessing strangely unfeminine ideas.

WRIGHT. Well, you know ideas change. What's one man's bucking steer to-day is another man's meat to-morrow.

ROGERS [*severely*]. There are *some* ideas that will remain forever distasteful to truly delicate and refined women. I believe I voice the sentiments of all the ladies present except Miss Wright, when I say female suffrage is one of these distasteful and pernicious ideas.

[*They all nod and murmur approval.*]

SCRUBBS. Wouldn't it be a good thing if we passed resolutions disapproving of certain things? The D. A. R. frequently pass resolutions.

SMITH. We ought, as a moral influence in the community, to which all eyes are turned, to place ourselves on record as upholding all ethical principles and disapproving certain deleterious practises. Smoking, for instance. I think we ought to protest against smoking. Such a measure on our part would have great weight with gentlemen. Those who are given to the filthy habit would be discouraged, those who abstain would be strengthened by our moral support.

WHITE. But don't you think gentlemen enjoy smoking?

SMITH [*severely*]. The reason men persist in this bad habit is that they are pampered by foolish women in it. My husband *never* smoked.

MELLIMORE. Ah, one can not think of the smoking of cigars or pipes as lovely or uplifting or beautiful. The practise seems so — pardon the word — so low. Suppose we add the suggestion to gentlemen that instead of smoking they should — they should burn incense.

WRIGHT. Well, I like the smell of a good cigar. And men look so cozy and comfortable smoking after dinner. Women never look cosy and comfortable. How can they? How can you be cozy and comfortable in a corset and bustle? You can't exactly relax when you're on top of things that feel as if you were sitting on a mastodon's skeleton. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if women didn't wear corsets some day or bustles either. And I shouldn't be surprised if they smoked. I'd like to smoke, myself. Yes, I would, I know I would. Some day, I bet, after dinner, cigarettes will be passed to women just the same as to the men.

W.-J. What would Lord Tennyson say?

WRIGHT. He smoked the vilest black cigars himself, all the time, so I s'pose he'd disapprove. His kind of man would. He belonged to the band of the monopolizing male.

WHITE. Are you going to pass a resolution against smoking? Because I don't believe my husband would let me join a society that was down on smoking.

SMITH. We cannot countenance smoking because of the deplorable weakness of one man.

ROGERS. We are a little group of earnest women. All eyes will be fastened on us for guidance.

MELLIMORE. Couldn't you — couldn't you suggest incense to him?

WHITE. If you all feel that way about it, I think I'd better not join.

SMITH. You ought not to give in to your husband's infirmity.

WHITE. But it don't seem such an awful infirmity to me.

SMITH. *It is.*

W.-J. We ought to set our faces like flint against evil.

MELLIMORE. Couldn't you divert his attention to æsthetic culture?

ROGERS. We must uphold the morality of the community.

SCRUBBS. We've *got* to disapprove of things.

WHITE [*almost crying*]. Well, if James and me are so bad, I won't lower you all by being in your society, then. And I guess you needn't count on my house for your old entertainments, neither.

ROGERS. Oh, there, Mrs. White, you mustn't feel that way.

WHITE. Well, I do. [*They all rise and try to pacify her.*]

W.-J. Oh, dear Mrs. White, we couldn't possibly get along without you. It isn't your house — it's you — your decorative nature that's so valuable.

SCRUBBS. Let's leave out the resolution about smoking and put one in about divorce.

SMITH. As church members, all in good and regular standing, we must all disapprove of divorce.

WRIGHT. I don't — but then I'm an agnostic and scientific.

MELLIMORE. Ah, the wedding ceremony could be made so adorably beautiful with cherubic choir boys, seraphic lilies, heavenly candles, with all the solemn pomp and pageantry — if people would only remember the beauty of the scenery of this ceremony they would be too happy ever to want to be divorced unless it was to marry some one else and have it all repeated.

WRIGHT. It ought to be performed by a magistrate.

MELLIMORE. Oh, the gods of beauty forbid!

WRIGHT. It ought to be managed by the state and lots of 'em oughtn't to be allowed.

SMITH. *Allowed?* The holy sacrament of marriage *allowed?*

WRIGHT. Holy, your grandmother. It's biological.

[*The ladies all protest. Exclamations of "Oh, how dreadful."*]

WRIGHT [*grinning*]. Yes, biological, and so is divorce usually.

W.-J. I am only a poor literary person without any knowledge of science but I have *feeling!* If the ladies are so insensitive to the misfortunes under which I am laboring, if the ladies wish to pass a resolution disapproving of divorce, if one of them compares it and marriage to biology,

which I understand is the study of bugs and beetles, then I feel, ladies, I feel that I must withdraw. [*She rises. General consternation.*]

WRIGHT. I guess it isn't worth while for me to try to explain my point, but marriage, you know, is — er — is, well, just to have babies.

MELLIMORE. Ah, my dear young person, what a — indeed, what a gross way to speak of the — the beautiful psychic blending of two souls. And, if you must speak of the — the material result, why not use a more refined expression? Please call them infants, at least.

W.-J. Pray, ladies, pray, pardon me and I will withdraw.

ROGERS. Oh, no, Mrs. Weston-Jones, there has been a most unfortunate misunderstanding. Of course, you must not go.

MELLIMORE. Ah, Mrs. Weston-Jones, remain with us. You love beautiful things and you are so intense.

SCRUBBS. You mustn't go.

[*All of them, "Oh, no, indeed not." She is mollified and reseats herself.*]

W.-J. If you insist that I am of a little value to you, and the work.

WRIGHT. I guess I'll have to ask you to excuse me. I've got some gardening I want to do before sunset. I don't exactly see what you are driving at. Maybe later when you get started I can come in with the herd and do some work. *Au revoir.* You'll find me when you want me. Of course I'll be glad to work.

[*She goes out and all of them really gladly say good-by.*]

ROGERS. She thinks *this* is not work.

WRIGHT [*calling back*]. Work is to him who thinks it is. *Auf wiedersehen.*

MELLIMORE. Do you know that young person is in her most singular and impossible way really very intense?

WHITE. Ain't it a nice thing to do, don't you think, to take up wood-carving? Under a regular teacher, I mean.

W.-J. Oh, don't you think that china-painting would be much more practical? Now, really, Miss Flora May, don't you think so?

MELLIMORE. Ah, but lectures on art! Oh, think of the wonderful opportunities to hear the artistic message from the lips of gentlemen who are intense! Mr. Herbert Ingraham Welholland Ives, Mr. Edwin Rudolford Blessington Fenwick of England, they could be induced for a diminutive consideration to come over and talk to us.

SCRUBBS. I think first of all we ought to choose colors. I would suggest old gold and peacock blue.

W.-J. I think we ought to decide at once upon a motto. A motto means so much to outsiders.

MELLIMORE. We must certainly adopt a motto in French. French is the tongue of culture and mottoes.

SMITH. We need organization. Thorough organization.

WHITE. We'd ought to have a nice name. I heard of a club in Indianapolis called the Young Ladies' Society for Culture and Art. It's just called the Y. L. S. C. A. And there's another in Terryhut named the Ladies' Culture in Art,

Drama, and Literature Society, the L. C. A. D. L. S.

W.-J. It would be so *bright* if we could get a name that would make initials spelling something. Like Ladies' Art and Culture Association — that would spell L. A. C. A. and we could be called the Laca.

MELLIMORE. Laca. It has a mellifluous melody. And that means so much. Oh, the beauty of sound speaks volumes.

WHITE. I wish we could study travel. I just adore travel books.

SCRUBBS. It seems to me we ought to take up history. The ladies of the D. A. R. know so much history.

ROGERS. Ladies, it seems to me we might have papers on all these subjects. We might give at least one meeting, for instance, to American history. And perhaps another to a consideration of China.

W.-J. China-painting — *delightful!*

ROGERS. Well, no, I was referring to the empire. We might give a whole meeting to benighted China.

SMITH. We could have a missionary to address us.

[*Maid appears at the door with a tray.*]

WHITE. Oh, there are the refreshments. Should I tell her to wait?

W.-J. Couldn't we adjourn?

ROGERS. Ladies, shall we have our organization at another meeting, then? All those in favor of adjournment, please say I.

[CURTAIN.]

THE GATE OF WISHES.

PERSONS. *The Man, the Girl, and the Little Folk.*

TIME. *The afternoon of Hallowe'en.*

PLACE. *The top of a hill where there is a scattered clump of tall old pine trees and in the background a thicker growth of sturdy beeches. The hill, sloping down in front, has been partly cleared away generations ago and now gives a view across and up and down a broad cultivated valley; on the opposite hill are the great houses of rich estates; far to the south the valley shades into a big smoky city. A girl and man appear walking slowly and talking.*

HE. This day is truly like "apples of gold in pitchers of silver"! Well, a man has a right to his portion of joy and I regard loafing in the afternoon as perfectly legitimate. Oh, I have Biblical sanction for it—"and the evening and the morning were the first day." There is no mention made of the afternoon and without doubt work is suspended then.

SHE. Of course you know who is said to be able to cite Scripture for his own evil purposes! Which remark doesn't sound very polite from a

person who ought to be grateful. I wanted to come awfully. [*She sits down on a log.*]

HE. And I believe I knew you did all the while. Yet I spent the morning trying to resist the temptation of telephoning you, and when I finally rang you up, I was crazy for fear I would be too late and you'd have something else on hand.

SHE. Why do you say temptation? Are you running off from something?

HE [*sitting down on the further end of the log*]. No, I am running off *to* something. [*He smiles at her.*]

SHE [*looking back among the beeches*]. Are the trees so dangerous?

HE. Not for me — I was thinking of you.

SHE. They have never hurt me.

HE. Bless their hearts, of course not. But I was only thinking that it was a little impertinent to ask you to come out here. If it had been the matinée — but I was too selfish to sacrifice myself to four-walled propriety on a golden afternoon like this. A walk in the woods is not considered a great treat by most people and is a little unconventional, isn't it? You see I don't know you very well.

SHE. Don't you?

HE. Do I?

SHE. Don't you?

HE. *Do* I? That is the question that has been puzzling me ever since I met you. There are people you see always and never know, and there are people you see once and have known always. It is a feeling on the border of mys-

tery. Have I known you in a previous existence or am I really jumping to an end I have the right to gain only through the sedate and polite process of acquaintance? Or do I know you through that blessed something — call it intuitive sympathy? Or is it all a mistake? Maybe I am just the victim of my own stupid conceit and don't understand you any better than the dozens of other girls I meet.

SHE. Don't you understand them?

HE. I'm afraid I don't bother to. But about you. Am I right in feeling I know you? One can be foolish enough to make humiliating mistakes, you know.

SHE. But you are not that. And — I had the same curious impression in regard to *you.*

HE. And of course *you* are not that sort. [*They both laugh. His voice becomes exultingly firm as he says*], I am going to trust to the feeling about it then. Let's make a fire. [*He rises and begins to look about for sticks.*] Can't we put convention aside — make the old gossip stand on her head in a corner, so? [*He illustrates with a stick.*] And begin as if we were old friends?

SHE. I thought we had begun that way. Didn't I stand on the back platform with you coming out?

HE. But that might have been because you liked my company better than that of the fat women with their baskets inside the car. I was flattered by your preference.

SHE. Being unconventional with a person is a preference. I have a much older acquaint-

ance with those market women than I have with you. [*She gets up and helps him gather sticks.*] Did you ever notice their faces particularly? Time seems to have baked them to a brown stolidity and the least effort toward expression would crack them. You wonder if the baked clay exterior hides any emotion.

HE. Oh, a brown Chinese sort, perhaps. Yet I wonder if it is not an older and milder and more civilized sensation than *we* ever have. But who are we to judge? You and I? Why we are half savages, vagabonds, gypsies — at least I am and I hoped you were. You see I am becoming more boldly aggressive, pretending to a knowledge of you I have no right to possess, much less to *own*. [*She smiles at the pun.*] But you are a gypsy, aren't you? Please say you are!

SHE [*sits down on a log. He goes on gathering sticks, breaking them up, heaping them and building the fire while she talks*]. I suppose I shouldn't care for these woods if I weren't, and I do care for them awfully. I know all the valleys and hills round here as one knows the corners of a house one has lived in always. I don't mind confessing to you because you are going to be as foolish about them as I am.

HE [*smiling*]. I shouldn't wonder.

SHE. This never moving flock of pine trees here on this hill crest is my lode-star. I can see it from any point for miles over the other hills across the valley. This hill is high, you know, and the pines, taller and darker and in winter fatter than the other trees, are an easily detected landmark. Do you like my view?

HE. I had an intuition of it when we came through the gate into the woods from the traveled road. [*Regarding it critically.*] Yes, [*slowly*] it's adequate. It seems to contain everything — a compact, well-regulated little view with small corpulent market-gardens in the foreground and in the background stately hills with several castles atop, and down the valley at one end of the old gray city, and up the valley at the other end the dear farm country — all not too far to suggest stray fancies.

SHE. I knew you would notice the castles.

HE. Of course, for in one of them, in the top of that tallest tower there is a princess and she is looking over in this direction.

SHE. An ogre has her imprisoned?

HE. Just, and our fire will be a beacon light to her. Then she will know she still has friends in the world and the crickets will sing her a cheerfuller song when the dusk comes up through the grass and gathers in the trees and bushes.

SHE. We might send her a message by a robin.

HE [*starting with a quick look at her*]. Never! Never! He must be reserved as a little messenger only between you and me. He is too nice to be carelessly employed.

SHE. He *is* nice — I might have known he would be a little friend of yours. All of life seems nice to-day.

HE [*sitting down by her*]. Oh, unusually. [*After a pause.*] On this sort of yellow day, life runs around crying "come and eat me," like your little roast pigs in the story you told me.

SHE. Yellow is so soft and gracious, yet the dictionary merely says that it is one of the primitive and prismatic colors, and that united with blue it yields green and with red it produces orange.

HE. I should say that yellow maple leaves united with blue sky yield joy, and with red oak leaves produce delight. A full-leaved glorious maple tree above me on a warm October day seems a still, exquisite, suspended altar from which is lowered an incense of joyous peace as I walk beneath looking up into its heavenly sufficiency.

SHE. Have you noticed how towards dusk when everything else is darkening, these fair maples seem to catch the light and hold it? Spirits of little children must poise among the branches — they are out earlier at night than the older ghosts, you know, because they have to go to bed earlier, being so young.

HE. Did you ever see a ghost?

SHE. No, but I haven't given up hope.

HE. Then you probably will. But you — I dare not use the words I'd like, I wonder if I'll ever dare? *You* ought to see all sorts of beautiful and curious folk.

SHE. These woods are full of them, you know — the little folk. [*Smiling, she takes a stick and draws a fairy circle.*] But to see them you have to be very happy and to come at the time they like best — which nobody knows. It isn't that they are shy, but they are very discriminating and haughty. Still, I'm trusting to see

them, for I'm very respectful toward them and I want to so much.

HE. And people usually get what they want very much.

SHE. Do you believe that?

HE. Very surely, but they don't always know what they desire and they aren't always conscious of the thing that comes. The gate of wishes has an intricate fastening whose secret many people can not win through, and those who at last find themselves on the other side, sometimes look with strange eyes upon an unexpected country; some of them see it with the eyes of the body and some with the eyes of the mind and some only with the eyes of the soul. [*After a pause.*] There is something I want awfully, but in myself I lose faith. Do you suppose I ever shall have it?

SHE. Do you like it well enough?

HE. Yes, I like *her* well enough.

SHE [*starting and staring at some trees at the side*]. Oh, did you see anything then?

HE. I thought I did but in these autumn woods
When big oak leaves come softly sailing down
And birds still loiter for the warm gold days
And rabbits wildly skurry out of sight
And hallowe'en is drawing on apace
And a dear witch sits by you on a log,
All sorts of things may happen to your eyes.

SHE. Oh, hear the rustle of those poplar leaves! It is the first of all the dull brown sounds; for the sounds in spring are gentle and

when the breezes stir the leaves they yield a music like the color blue, but in the fall the sound grows stiff and like the color brown. Their leaves will cling to those wee oak trees till the spring is here and then forlorn, in a new world, their own life overpast, they'll flutter in a passion of despair and wailing, seem like the unhappy spirits of unburied men. [*After a pause.*] Surely something stirred around and in that ghostly blossom of the golden rod.

HE. A little hungry bluebird hunting seeds
Maybe it was. I like the golden rod
Fantastic, pale and mystical as now
Better than when it flaunts its hardier hue.

SHE. These slender stalks will last the winter out,
And on this hillside cold and lone and drear
The winds will bend and beat them all night through.

HE [*looking wistfully at her*].
But now the air is warm and they content
As I am in the radiance I love.

SHE. The romance of the year seems gathered up
And strewn before our feet these autumn days.
No one can miss it.

HE. Even the dullest soul
Must stumble on it. It is everywhere:
It's in the air in color, scent, and sound.
I smell it in the wood-smoke even now —
That tenuous spirit of the old strong hills —
And hear it from those birds all winging south
From lands of dark green pine and dark blue lake.

SHE. I heard a sound.

HE. From that low hawthorn bush.
VOICE [*singing*].

When the night wind carries the tang of the woods —
Out on the hillside longing to be —
Where the elves do peer from their flower-leaf hoods
Who will go hunting, go hunting with me?

[*They stare at each other, then he starts to his feet and takes a step in the direction of the voice.*]
SHE. Oh, please don't move — you'll frighten them away.

ANOTHER VOICE [*singing*].

When the wild winds blow on darksome nights —
Up in the boughs of the gnarled apple tree
Where the gnomes are smoking their little clay pipes —
Who will go climbing, go climbing with me?

[*He sits down again beside her.*]
SHE. Isn't it kind of them to come so near?
The rare good little folk we've longed to see.
HE. But we don't see them yet — what did you say?
That we must bear the blessing of pure joy
And be in the right place at the right time —
The place and time the little folk love best.

The stipulation's difficult and yet
'Tis so with everything of dearest worth.
SHE [*absently*].
One sees the things his own heart holds most dear.
HE. That wraithlike labyrinth of ancient weeds
Is nice enough to hold a dozen elves.
And in among those thistles tall and fierce
Lithe little brownies slip with purpose dire —
For they, the scamps, use thistles craftily
To comb the black cat's back and make sparks fly.
SHE. Up in the top of that dead oak whose limbs
Are like the knuckles of a lame old man,
There lives a serious owl and naughty sprites
Tease him all day what time he tries to sleep.
ANOTHER VOICE [*singing*].
When the moon rides high mid warlike clouds —
Up in the air so far and free —
Where the witches are weaving filmy shrouds —
Who will go sailing, go sailing with me?
HE. They're coming nearer, do you see them yet?
SHE. No, but I feel their presence very close.
Perhaps it is not yet the witching time.
HE. We're happy, aren't we? At least I am.
To be with you is happiness enough
To fill these woods with spirits of delight.
[*He looks about into the woods and towards the west.*]
This is the blessed twilight of the year
And now the silent twilight of the day,
The drop distilled from all time's loveliness,

When in the west the sky grows broad and fair
With flaming topaz light that gently melts
Into a liquid turquoise up above.
The robin sings his wistful twilight song,
Then wee small gossip crickets will fill in
The time till comes the wee small haunting owl.

SHE. You love these little things? — The flight of crows,
The crickets —

HE. They are very dear to me
In the big woodland world I love so well —
Only less dear than are the spots of light
Within the woodland shadows of your eyes.

[*He leans toward her and looks deep into her eyes.*]

SHE. Please tell me what you see?

HE. A mystery.
I look through beauty — never see the end
And with my heavenly longing am content.

[*He draws closer, taking her into his arms. She seems to see something in one of the hawthorn bushes and whispers to him. They smile and nod to each other and watch eagerly.*]

SHE [*softly*].
We're very happy at their holy time.

ANOTHER VOICE [*singing*].

When the wind's wild spirit lures to roam —
Out on the country roads are we —
Where all vagabonds are at home
Who will go roving, go roving with me?

[*Voice dies away in the distance.*]

HE. We'll come, sweet vagabonds,
SHE. We'll come, we'll come.
The moon is climbing o'er the castle's tower.
HE. She's hastening to catch the message dear,
The rosy kiss the sun has left for her.
And, see, she is attended by a page,
A little star who keeps close after her.
ANOTHER VOICE [*in the distance*].
In the chalice of a flower
Do I sleep the long day through,
In the amber twilight hour
Do I come to you, my dear,
Do I come to you.
HE.
In twilight glow we linger till
Our fire falls in, still burning slow
Upon the wooded ridge of hill
In twilight glow.

Deep down a stream seems scarce to flow,
Our far-flown fancies have their will,
The brown glen swims with mist below.

The tawny, saffron beech leaves fill
A background 'gainst which softly blow
Your tawny locks the ruddier still
In twilight glow.
[*As he speaks he rises, taking her by the hand; she rises, too, and they wander off in the direction of the little folk. A voice is heard farther away, singing.*]
VOICE.
Who will go roving, go roving with me?

[*Another voice in another direction, singing softly.*]

VOICE.

Do I come to you, my dear,
Do I come to you.

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